

EMERGENT RUSSIA:
THE GEOSTRATEGIC IMPACT

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The undersigned certify that this thesis meets master's-level standards of research, argumentation, and expression.

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ABSTRACT

Russia's future ranking in the world order depends heavily on its ability to remedy current negative trends in corruption, demographics, economics, and governance. Historical background supports forecast for a rapidly recovering Russia and serves as the base for predictions of a geopolitically significant Russia. This paper uses the term "resurgent" to capture the possibility of Russia regaining its Soviet strength and influence through an autocratic social structure. Contrarily, the term "reemerging" best describes a powerful and successful future Russia significantly different from its communist past. Rather, the path Russia took under the tsars will likely continue, overcoming the Soviet travesty while remaining uniquely Eurasian versus Western.

Beginning in 2000, an increasingly centralized government funneled nine years of increased fossil fuels prices into the coffers of the Russian government and deepened the pockets of the Russian elite. Despite pervasive poverty and a crumbling infrastructure, government investment of their regained wealth in military, government, and technology reforms elicited a pro-government response from much of the population. As President Putin begins his third term, he has multiple directions to lead his country. It appears he will continue his past policies, but growing dissention could force him to concede some level of power to an elected body. More likely, Russia's growing middle class may push reforms, which would cause the reemergence of Russia as a more democratic and responsible state. This paper closes with recommendations for the United States to consider when addressing a reemerging Russia.

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INTRODUCTION

From Kievan Rus through the Soviet Union, Russia grew and became the world's largest country and a nuclear superpower commanding attention. The abrupt Soviet collapse of 1991 initiated a partitioning of the giant union into 15 sovereign states, none of which held the power or standing to compete globally with the United States. A broken Russia under Mikhail Gorbachev, and then Boris Yeltsin, attempted social and political reforms as energy prices declined. Tied directly to the commodities market, Russia's economy declined, leading many political scientists to question Russia's importance.¹ "Of late, however, Russia has reclaimed at least a part of its former status as a result of its growing economy, its expanding influence in energy markets, and its increasing assertiveness in foreign policy."²

This thesis examines Vladimir Putin's role in the post-Soviet stabilization and growth of Russia by exploring whether he is capable of leading a resurgent Russia to rival the United States, or the leader of a new Russia reemerging as a responsible regional power. To answer this question, this monograph identifies historical trends in Russian governance, ties them to contemporary events, and uses them to forecast the geopolitical impact of Russia's recovery. Research focused on validating the thesis that in line with her pre-Soviet history, modern Russia is emerging "wealthier, more stable, increasingly less democratic, and more assertive globally" under a strong leader who resembles a later tsar.³ Exploration of available literature and statistics revealed that growth would remain limited by negative demographics, rampant corruption, social and infrastructure problems, and an environment non-

¹ Michael L. Bressler, ed., *Understanding Contemporary Russia* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishing, 2009), 1.

² Bressler, *Understanding Contemporary Russia*, 1.

³ Olga Oliker et al., *Russian Foreign Policy: Sources and Implications* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Publishing, 2009), xi.

conducive to external investment; Putin has the option of leading Russia down a path to overcome many of these barriers to growth.

Analysis revealed a strong Russian culture, which produced an expanding state even through lean times, and a nearly persistent series of threats. The forecast is not for a resurgent Soviet Union, or Russian superpower, but an increasingly relevant and stable Eurasian power capable of competing with China and the European Union both politically and militarily. Unlike its European and Asian competitors, the vast Russian expanses host considerable natural resources, room to grow, and excess energy reserves. With a strong despot at the helm, Russia is using her geographic advantages to modernize the state. Russia's historical record indicates she will grow to occupy a more favorable geostrategic position than her Eurasian neighbors do, especially if current environmental warming trends continue in the Arctic. Irrespective of how it emerges, the resultant stronger Russia presents geopolitical and military challenges for the United States and its allies.

Chapter 1

Historical Trends in Regional Dominance

At first glance, the Russian Federation appears vast and broken. Former and now future President Vladimir Putin and his protégé, Dmitry Medvedev, publicly acknowledge many of Russia's barriers to resurgence. History tells a different story: one of a frozen Russia, geographically disadvantaged, constantly threatened, and despotic, which grew at an astonishing rate into a global superpower. Current Russian leadership is leveraging this history to remedy demographic, economic, and military cataclysms. A brief review of the Russian state's 800-year ascendancy provides context and informs aspirations of the current Kremlin leadership.

Political Geography.¹

Napoleon remarked, "the policy of a state lies in its geography."² Pipes claimed, "The contemporary Western reader has little patience for physical geography, and understandably so, because science and technology have to an unprecedented degree liberated him from dependence on nature."³ Geography influenced social patterns and cultures through a sense of security or vulnerability, arability, climate, and natural food sources. As waves of Asiatic barbarians swept across the Eurasian steppes and penetrated Western Europe in the last half of the first millennium, the Slavs who later became the Rus spread north and east. Their new environment shaped Russian culture, mainly

¹ George J. Demko, *Reordering the World: Geopolitical Perspectives On the Twenty-First Century*, 2nd ed., ed. George J. Demko and William B. Wood (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), 4. "Political geography is the analysis of how political systems and structures—from the local to international levels—influence and are influenced by the spatial distribution of resources, events, and groups."

² Yves Lacoste, "Geopolitics and Foreign Policy," *SAIS Review* 4 (Summer-Fall 1984): 213, quoted in Demko, *Reordering the World*, 94.

³ Richard Pipes and with a new foreword to the second edition by the author, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Penguin [Non-Classics], 1997), 2.

through its harsh winters, unique weather patterns, poor crop yields, and naturally navigable rivers.

Russia grew to include frozen tundra, dense forests, and southern steppes. The abundance of inland waterways for commerce contrasted the seasonally limited access to oceans. Eastward expansion, led by the fur trade, continued to Alaska, but proved a liability and unhelpful in linking the heartland with oceanic trade. As global trade transitioned to sail, Russia's geographical position left her in the cold, literally unable to access oceanic trade much of the year. Modern trade via the seas largely eluded Russia just as the Silk Road had passed out of reach to her south.⁴ Despite her vast resources, Russia fell behind her European neighbors in global trade and business due to limited access to their resources and foreign markets.

Still today, Russia's northern coast remains closed to seaborne trade for most of the year. Rail and then airlift opened access to some of modern Russia's resources, but are costly and limited in capacity relative to searift. Furthermore, many of Russia's natural resources remain difficult to access and extract. Rich with natural resources, Russia's frozen north might prove an economic blessing in disguise as technologies or environmental opportunities emerge for their extraction.

From its beginning, successive leaders of Russia sought remedies to her geographic deficiencies through social structure and expansion while simultaneously recognizing the harshness of her geography saved her. Russia at the end of the first millennium resembled a porcupine. Its dense forests, frigid climate, southern marshes, and poor farming deterred Asiatic hordes from conquering her as they had China and

⁴ Silk Road Study Group, "History," *Silk Road*, (San Jose, CA: San Jose State University, 2000). <http://gallery.sjsu.edu/silkroad/history.htm>. The "Silk Road" refers to ancient networked trade routes spanning the length of Southern Eurasia; later transitioning to mostly sea routes, these highways for commerce passed south and out of Russian reach.

Persia.⁵ It proved more beneficial to extract a tribute from the Russians, have them self-organize, and verify compliance through trusted agents and censuses.

Faced with a frozen north and insufficient agriculture, Russians expanded south and east into the arable steppes. Nomadic peoples also sought control over this “Eurasian breadbasket.”⁶ Lethal hordes of Asian barbarians contested southeastward Russian expansion, forcing Russia’s decentralized agrarian communal culture to centralize power and accept a large standing army.

Post Golden Horde Expansion

Nomadic Asians, such as the Turks and the Mongols, dominated the fertile southern steppes and rained terror on encroaching settlements from the seventh century until the disbanding of the Golden Horde in the fifteenth century. “Genghis Khan’s grandson,” Batu, led the Golden Horde of Mongols beginning in 1243 in Eurasian conquests, which resulted in Russia as a tributary.⁷ Tribute was common among empires and Russians paid tribute to the Norman elite of the Kievan state prior to the Mongols.⁸ Thucydides captured this master-subject relationship as natural 1,100 years before the Scandinavian warrior-elite of Kiev, and 1,500 years prior to the Golden Horde when he noted, “it was not we who set the example, for it has always been the law that the weaker should be subject to the stronger.”⁹

Centuries of invasion and tribute contributed to persistent paranoia while defining future Russian governance and social thought. Russia’s tsars learned from the Mongols “how to impose taxes on

⁵ Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 60.

⁶ Several authors use similar terms, usually in reference to Ukraine.

⁷ Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 336.

⁸ Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 34.

⁹ Thucydides, *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, ed. Robert B. Strassler and trans. Richard Crawley (New York, NY: Free Press, 1996), 1.76. 43.

households and commercial transactions, how to conduct diplomatic relations, how to operate a courier service, and how to deal with insubordinate subjects.”¹⁰ Government informants replaced Mongol informants; patrimonial governments who considered themselves landlords and inheritors of previous empires sought to reclaim the former land of both the Kievan state and the Golden Horde. The tsars’ government’s tenacity in holding or trying to reclaim former lands continued through the Soviet era and explain more contemporary Russian thought on what they term their “near abroad”. Furthermore, their patriarchal views on property carried over in their unwillingness to entrust their residents with any political power.¹¹

Division of the powerful Horde in the middle of the fifteenth century and the rise of a centralized Muscovite prince enabled the Russians to expand into the fertile south and ultimately conquer the khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan a century later. Ivan the Terrible (Ivan IV; 1547-1584) led these conquests during seven years of legal and government reforms marking the beginning of a geographic and population expansion lasting from the end of the Golden Horde through the Cold War.¹²

Political Unrest and Conquest.

The challenging Russian agricultural environment and dispersed population reinforced patriarchal communal organization, but afforded little protection. Fear of external threats and the requirement to feed the fledgling nation made expansion in their best interest. Expansion afforded better farming, more resources, increased pride, and a security buffer—when employed in a Fabian strategy of ceding territory to overextend the enemy and increase their susceptibility to counter

¹⁰ Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 74-75.

¹¹ Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 79.

¹² Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 14, 335-337.

attack—for protection. Collectively, fear, interest, and a politically savvy prince overrode governing through small family units and drove the consolidation of power under the Muscovites.

Reminiscent of ancient Greece, Muscovite Russia's aggressive emergence sparked internal and external concerns. Addressing Spartans, Athenians argued fear "forced [them] to choose between a strong government and danger," while Athens' growth as a power sparked a reciprocal fear among the Spartans.¹³ As Russians expanded settlements out of interest and congealed power from fear, war increased in frequency with their neighbors. "No state can be faulted for acting in its own interest," but it may provoke others to balance a growing power or settle disputes through violence.¹⁴

Russian leaders continued to leverage a cultural fear of invasion and coups throughout the tsarist era and into Soviet times as captured in "the Leninist notion of constant threats from abroad and within;" a tactic still employed.¹⁵ As Machiavelli noted in *The Prince*, ideally, a prince will rule through fear and love, but if he must choose one, fear is better.¹⁶ Persistent and realized fear held the potential to produce a disabling paranoia or political dissent due to a perception of the Russian government's inability to protect its citizens. Fear of the government added to social distrust. Ivan the Terrible "behaved exactly as the Mongols had," including his elimination of local self-government and political competition, which was "perfected" under Stalin and continued by Putin.¹⁷

¹³ Thucydides, *The Landmark Thucydides*, 1.23. 16, and 1.76. 43.

¹⁴ Thucydides, *The Landmark Thucydides*, 1.76. 43.

¹⁵ Stephen Blank and Richard Weitz, eds., *The Russian Military Today and Tomorrow: Essays in Memory of Mary Fitzgerald* (Carlisle, PA: SSI, 2010), 5.

¹⁶ Nicolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Rufus Goodwin (Boston, MA: Dante University Press, 2003), 94.

¹⁷ Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 82. Claim refers to the similarity between Stalin's "salami tactics" and Putin's local-level appointments.

Ivan IV did wonders for the expansion of Russia, but set a precedence of social unrest in his protracted Livonian War (1558-1583). Since that war, “almost every prolonged or protracted war in Russian history has been accompanied by, and sometimes itself triggered, large-scale socio-political unrest.”¹⁸ After Russia’s defeat at the hands of the British and French in the Crimean War, its elite population contested the tsar’s authority.¹⁹ Japanese defeat of Russia in 1905 triggered a popular revolution, and the protracted First World War broke the back of the crown.²⁰ In a similar contemporary example, the decade-long Afghan quagmire of 1979 to 1989, exacerbated by a decline in oil prices and growing costs of the Cold War, drove internal changes, produced a coup, and resulted in the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Ivan IV’s harsh treatment of subjects and slaves, associated with his further consolidation of power, led to civil unrest and an absconding serf population. Rapidly expanding territory created opportunities for the impoverished or discontent to escape in hope of a new future. The mass exodus triggered Ivan to fix peasants to the land, adding to their disgruntlement.²¹ Despite growing grassroots frustration and distrust of the government, patrimonial despots traditionally collapse from external conquest, not insurrection. In Russia’s case, governmental changes originated with the tsar, or later the Soviet Politburo, introducing limited European concepts or goods, while moderating the extent and rate of change. Selective top-down modernization continued to the present where Putin directed reforms.

After overthrowing Tsar Sophia, Peter the Great (Peter I; 1682-1725) initiated government and military reforms selectively copied from

¹⁸ Blank and Weitz, *The Russian Military Today and Tomorrow*, 5.

¹⁹ Michael L. Bressler, ed., *Understanding Contemporary Russia* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishing, 2009), 50.

²⁰ Bressler, *Understanding Contemporary Russia*, 48-59.

²¹ Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 85-101.

Europe while maintaining tight social control.²² Confronting defeat from Sweden and Turkey, the warrior prince, Peter I, recognized the need to modernize Russia's military. "Peter was determined to adopt the administrative, military, and economic model of the advanced nations to the west" and then turn inward to secure the state (a model replicated by the Japanese a 175 years later during their Meiji reforms.²³ The Emperor Meiji and his reformers accepted such a drastic "transformation could not be orchestrated only from above but would require an educated citizenry to push forward modernization from below as well."²⁴ Peter the Great's reforms balanced expanding rights to peasants with the state's dependence on the upper class to fill government positions and lead the military. Known as the father of the modern Russian military, Peter "firmly believed that military power was essential to every country's welfare" and his reforms occurred to strengthen Russia militarily.²⁵

Peter the Great's reforms and continuous military excursion produced results. With Peter at the helm, the Russian army defeated "Sweden in the Great Northern War," and built the Baltic town of St. Petersburg where he established a reformed government, including a Senate, and forced aspects of Western culture.²⁶ In spite of Peter's successes and reforms, enforced through his "secret police and manipulation of the Orthodox Church," he "remained frustrated and hamstrung by [Russia's] rampant corruption."²⁷

Catherine the Great (Catherine II; 1762-1796) was also a reformer and expander. Unlike Peter I, Catherine did not identify herself as a

²² Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 113.

²³ Bressler, *Understanding Contemporary Russia*, 42. and Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 113.

²⁴ S.C.M. Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: Perceptions, Power, and Primacy* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 86.

²⁵ Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 120.

²⁶ Bressler, *Understanding Contemporary Russia*, 43. An example of Peter I's Westernization was his adoption and enforcement of the European dress and grooming standards, which resulted in Russian males having to shave their beards.

²⁷ Bressler, *Understanding Contemporary Russia*, 43.

soldier first. The ambitious “German-born usurper of the throne” reformed civil service promotions, encouraged foreign travel, and tolerated a progressive free press until frightened by the French Revolution.²⁸ While not a soldier, Catherine’s forces acquired 200,000 square miles through conquest of Poland and war with Turkey. She reinforced her legitimacy through land grants of conquered territories as rewards for significant achievement in a cycle requiring ever more land to pay for the last excursion or war. Richard Pipes considered this “proof that concealed behind lofty slogans of “national tasks” lay the very mundane reality of seizing resources to satisfy Russia’s insatiable appetite for land, and in the process, shoring up the internal position of the monarchy. The situation has not changed today.”²⁹ Similar property distributions occurred as the Soviet Union expanded west after the Second World War (WWII) and again during the dismantling of the Soviet Union.

Looking West

Russia’s fight for access to southern farmlands and a warm-water port should not be understated, but the threat of a united Europe was existential. From early Slavic contact with Finnic and Baltic peoples, through wars fought against the Polish and Swedish, to Bonapartism, Nazism, and an expanding North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and European Union (EU), Russia built a deep distrust of the West.³⁰ Michael L. Bressler identified “Imperial Russia’s ruin in 1917 and the Soviet Union’s demise in 1991” as examples of two sequential forms of Russian governance overcome by their Western challenges.³¹

Simply because the majority of its population lives west of the Ural Mountains falls short of explaining the Russo-European linkage.

²⁸ Bressler, *Understanding Contemporary Russia*, 46, 48.

²⁹ Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 119.

³⁰ Blank and Weitz, *The Russian Military Today and Tomorrow*, 12, ch5.

³¹ Bressler, *Understanding Contemporary Russia*, 2.

Russia's heritage stemmed from European roots. Kievan Rus was a massive trading hub founded by Slavicized Swedish warrior-merchants. Their exploitive trade extracted slaves, commodities, and tribute from the north. A point of divergence from European influence was the Kievan Prince Vladimir's adoption of Orthodoxy. His choice influenced a Russian culture, which grew leery of Catholicism and acceptant of autocracy.³² Invasion and subsequent rule by the Mongols established an Eastern form of governance. Thus began Russia's conflicting ethnic ties to both European and Eastern culture.

Disassociated with the West and focused toward the East, Russia fell behind Europe socially, economically, and militarily. Ruling after liberation from their Asian leaders, Peter the Great was "the first Russian leader who sought to reduce the West's lead in science and technology," although motivated by military objectives.³³ His changes and wars defeated Nordic armies and enabled his successors to win more Eastern European lands. This long established Russian military and vast expanses of land protected Russia's major cities from Napoléon and Hitler by permitting a Fabian retreat, which overextended these two great armies and made them vulnerable to Russian advances and extreme weather. When viewed as encroachment into these buffer territories, NATO and EU expansion appear as the latest in a line of European threats to Russian existence.

Looking East

Comparatively, Russian expansion to the west was minimal relative to that to her east. The meagerly populated Russian Far East supported fur trappers and explorers, but its harsh and inhospitable climate discouraged migration. China viewed much of this expanded Russian Far East as their Northern Territory. Peter the Great

³² Bressler, *Understanding Contemporary Russia*, 35.

³³ Bressler, *Understanding Contemporary Russia*, 2.

acknowledged his inability to defend this vast claim and ceded a portion of this region to China in the Treaty of Nerchinsk (August 27, 1689)³⁴

Reigning immediately after Peter I, Catherine I obtained the Treaty of Kiakhta (1727), which established the current border of Mongolia and opened up the caravan trade route.³⁵ Russia was unable to recover the lands lost to China at Nerchinsk until Alexander II. At end of the Second Opium War, Alexander II's Russia filled the role of jackal and annexed the land north of the Amur through the Treaty of Aigun (28 May 1858).³⁶ Two years later the Treaty of Beijing further expanded the Russian coast south to Vladivostok, a border held until the 1990s.³⁷ By taking advantage of defeated neighbors, Russia negotiated this acquisition on the promise of aiding the Chinese in expelling the European powers. Russian opportunistic expansion began with the internal dissolution of the Golden Horde, and continued with the Soviet Union in Poland and Southeastern Europe.

Corruption, or something like it.

From a contemporary American perspective, a government intentionally operated through bribery is difficult to comprehend. The tsars continued the Kievan and Asian tradition of not paying government employees, forcing them to live off the land.³⁸ Through a western lens, underpaid or unpaid government officials invite corruption and exploitation through their venality. "In Muscovite Russia, the right of civil servants to line their pockets was to some extent regulated by the

³⁴ "Treaty of Nerchinsk - The First Treaty between Russia and China." <http://history.cultural-china.com/en/34History6480.html>

³⁵ "Treaty of Kyakhta - A Treaty between Russia and China." <http://history.cultural-china.com/en/34History6484.html>

³⁶ The author used the term "jackal" in reference to an opportunistic actor who deceives peers (other people or other states) for the express purpose of fraudulent gain.

³⁷ Three maps of "China-USSR Border: Eastern Sector," highlighting disputed areas. Property of the US Government. http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/china_ussr_e_88.jpg

³⁸ Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 288.

strict limits imposed on the length of time anyone could hold a provincial administrative post.”³⁹

“Peter the Great made a valiant effort to put an end to this whole system” when he began paying officials and outlawed living off the locals.⁴⁰ This reform failed to take root for a myriad of reasons including tradition, a lack of enforcement, and inconsistent pay. “Even under Peter’s strict regime only officials of the central bureau in St Petersburg and Moscow received their salaries, and irregularly at that.”⁴¹ Rural bureaucrats (chinovniki) continued to extract an income from their environment while central officials used their power to line their pockets.⁴²

After Peter’s death, financial mismanagement and difficulties prevented his immediate successors from continuing to pay officials.⁴³ It took the great reformer, Catherine II, to right the nation. She focused reforms on government administration and allocated funds to pay government employees; “in 1767, nearly a quarter of the budget was set aside for that purpose.”⁴⁴ Nonetheless, government salaries remained too small and inconsistent to live on, reinforcing the tradition of bribes and corruption.⁴⁵ “Like agents of the Mongol khans, chinovniki entrusted with provincial administration functioned primarily as collectors of taxes and recruits; they were not “public servants” at all.”⁴⁶

In Russia, the Kievan practice of officials living off the land normalized corruption despite valiant attempts by various tsars to remedy this. “And so it went on.”⁴⁷ “The higher an official’s rank, the

³⁹ Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 282.

⁴⁰ Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 283.

⁴¹ Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 283.

⁴² Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 285.

⁴³ Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 69, 283.

⁴⁴ Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 283.

⁴⁵ Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 283.

⁴⁶ Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 283.

⁴⁷ Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 284.

greater were his opportunities of amassing a fortune at society's expense"—a kleptocracy if ever there was one.⁴⁸ It appears this tradition continues to the present—a point of contention in the recent Russian presidential election: "Public corruption, ubiquitous in Russia of the Muscovite and imperial periods was a symptom of a deeper malaise, lawlessness, of which it is always a faithful companion."⁴⁹

Unlike Russia, Western states recognized a separation between the executive and judicial branches of government. By 200 BC Romans had an independent judiciary; a tradition present in Europe from the Middle Ages on.⁵⁰ Russia did not. Alexander II expanded courts to rural areas and reformed the judiciary in the 1860s.⁵¹ The government often initiated trials when it served the state's interests, while individuals dealt with, or attempted to avoid, an "auction" style of injustice where the highest bidder won the case.⁵² Both Peter I and Catherine II made judicial reforms, but without written law or standardized punishment and with rampant corruption, their efforts failed. Later reforms found success before the catastrophic seventy-year Soviet experiment with Marxism undid them.

Conclusion - Unique Perspective.

Russia has a unique culture with a history of violent changes in government, a unique language and religion, and a strong sense of insecurity. Paranoia from internal and external threats is justified, given their experiences. Nearly constant threats to the nation's survival required maintenance of a large standing military, easily filled from Russia's once massive population, but strained its economic and social systems. Insecurity and aspirations of regional and global power go far

⁴⁸ Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 284.

⁴⁹ Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 287.

⁵⁰ Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 288.

⁵¹ Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 288, 341.

⁵² Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 288.

to explain Russia's cultural acceptance of a robust military and a strong central government.

Nearly a thousand years of increasing strength and territory is the positive side of Russian history from a tributary to a superpower. Deflating this pride is a checkered past with several devastating invasions, persistent internal strife, corruption as a defining way of life, and a lust for European advancements tempered by an Asian desire to control. Despite the efforts of Russia's *great* tsars, Russia is not a Western power and is unlikely to become one. The drastic cultural and governmental changes required to Westernize Russia within a generation are without historical precedent.

Exploration of Russian culture, governance, and economy over the past millennium provides insight into Russia's current structure and aspirations. Overarching historical trends include rapid population increases following/driving social reforms, the accepted desire to centralize power, creation of artificial dependencies through regionalization, and pervasive paranoia stemming from naturally open borders, civil unrest, and tyrannical governments. Attempts at reform usually matched shifts in power as either violent or devastating.

A historical precedence also exists for continuous territorial expansion. Some viewed expansion to former Kievan, Mongol, or Muscovite lands as an inherited right, while others viewed expansion as a means to sustain the monarchy. In either case, history shows the Russian trend toward expansion. At its peak, the Soviet sphere of influence "encompassed a space remarkably reminiscent of the scope of the Mongol Empire."⁵³

⁵³ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1997), 6.

Chapter 2

Post-Cold War Standing

The unexpected death of the Soviet Union marked a major shift in the global balance of power. The United States emerged the undisputed dominant power in a unipolar world, but literally on the other side of the globe. Eurasia maintained much of its global influence through the political inertia of Western Europe, economic power of Japan, growing economic and industrial power of China, and a broken and confused Russia with residual nuclear capabilities and United Nations (UN) Security Council veto.

Following tsarist traditions, late-Soviet and post-Soviet Russian leaders attempted to force openness and liberalizing reforms from the top while maintaining tight control over the population. Hindered by economic woes, an unprepared public and infrastructure, and ill-informed measures that they rushed, their attempted reforms produced food shortages, a crumbling infrastructure, a demographic decline, and expanded corruption. One segment of government initially protected from drastic changes was the military. Yet eventually, the receding economy and diminishing population forced a drawdown within the sacred defense establishment, although changes fell short of the modernization level required by their new missions.

Soviet Implosion

Presenting the Grotian, or even Kantian view, Samuel P. Huntington suggested Soviet strength after WWII made its union and ideology attractive, in a soft-power way—a lure of sorts, attracting those with a free choice.¹ The industry-leading Soviet space program of 1957

¹ For more on the writings of Hugo Grotius or Immanuel Kant, see: Jon Miller, "Hugo Grotius," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2011 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta,

through 1963 epitomized this appeal with their string of pride-building firsts in orbit: the first to orbit a manmade satellite, and then the first man, and finally, the first woman. However, the Soviet space lead was short lived and diverted vast quantities of resources from other sectors.

Samuel Huntington argued Soviet economic stagnation at the end of the 1960s began the reversal of Soviet appeal. Furthermore, it led to a weakened military and an unsuccessful campaign in Afghanistan, which contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. This sequence implied subjects chose to leave a no longer-appealing Soviet Union. This shallow argument missed the tyrannical expansion in the early years of the Soviet empire as well as the forced migrations, millions murdered, borders redrawn, and the significant role played by the ever-dynamic prices of oil and grain—Soviet linchpins.²

Steven G. Marks supported the theory of economic weaknesses as the detriment of the Soviet Union. His research revealed the unsustainably high costs associated with remote Siberian activities such as mining, infrastructure, sustainment, and defense. Specifically, he highlighted the decision Leonid Brezhnev made to fund global prestige through a global military, space race, and foreign aid over improving infrastructure and social welfare. The Soviet command economy removed incentives to improve quality or “respond to customer demand,” producing shortages in a country of vast resources.³ A lack of incentives promoted inefficiency while these shortages sustained a black market, eventually producing negative growth rates by the 1980s and a populace envious of the consumerist West.⁴ Mikhail Gorbachev was among those

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/grotius/>; Frederick Rauscher, "Kant's Social and Political Philosophy," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2012 Edition forthcoming), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant-social-political/>.

² Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (Boulder, CO: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 92-93, 142-143, 148.

³ Michael L. Bressler, ed., *Understanding Contemporary Russia* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishing, 2009), 73.

⁴ Bressler, *Understanding Contemporary Russia*, 74.

fed up with the failed Soviet policies, so he directed major reforms to save socialism. Uninformed as to how a free-market worked, Gorbachev's "*perestroika* amounted to a haphazard series of stop-gap measures that dismantled the planned economy without providing proper support for the private sector," which produced the failure he had sought to prevent.⁵

Reaching back even further for a point of decline, Zbigniew Brzezinski identified a pattern of internal Soviet collapse beginning shortly after WWII. He revealed a gradual awakening of sub-national and religious identities by out-groups who "began to view Soviet power as a form of imperial domination by a people to whom they did not feel culturally inferior."⁶ The three major groups were the Central and Eastern Europeans, the Muslim south, and the Chinese within a decade after their Communist revolution. Festering internal dissent caused the Soviet Union to fragment once it imploded from economic collapse and political instability. Brzezinski's view coincided with others who postulated totalitarian empires *collapse* while authoritarian empires succumb to invasion.⁷

Irrespective of how or why the Soviet Union collapsed, it did so without military defeat and unexpectedly from behind its secretive curtain. The failure of communism and, specifically, the Soviet system took with it many of the territorial gains earned by the tsars since the

⁵ Bressler, *Understanding Contemporary Russia*, 76.

⁶ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1997), 8-9.

⁷ Brzezinski's distinction between 'totalitarian' and 'authoritarian' regimes reflects the view of many Western political scientists during the Cold War. The separate terms found utility at the end of the Cold War when US Ambassador to the UN Kirkpatrick used the distinction to justify support to undesirable authoritarian regimes. Others argued collapse is at one end of possibilities and liberalized democracy at the other; was possible for stated to move along that scale, the Soviet Union included. They hold the collapse of the Soviet Union as proof that Brzezinski and Kirkpatrick were wrong. Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, "Dictatorships and Double Standards," *Commentary Magazine* Volume 68, No. 5, November 1979. <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/article/dictatorships-double-standards/> And Ted Galen Carpenter, "The United States and Third World Dictatorships: A Case for Benign Detachment," *Policy Analysis* No. 58, August 15, The CATO Institute, 1985. <http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa058.html>

1600s in Europe and the 1800s elsewhere. Territorial losses to the West threatened her capital, while losses to the South and East resulted in the loss of extensive natural gas and mineral deposits as well as the Russian space launch facility and key military bases. Socially, the liberated Caucasus and anticipated Muslim takeover of Tajikistan posed threats to the Russian culture not experienced since the Ottoman wars of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries. Globally, many viewed Russia as plummeting, essentially overnight, from a superpower to a Third World state.⁸

Collapse of the Soviet Union produced geopolitical and security challenges for the new Russian Republic. As states broke away from the Soviet Union, they found the advantages and disadvantages of independence. For physical and economic security as well as ideology, many of these freed European states looked to NATO, the EU, and the US. As Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic joined NATO, they opened the door for their neighbors to the east. NATO's accession of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania separated Kaliningrad from Saint Petersburg and more than halved the distance from NATO's borders to Moscow. In Southern Europe, NATO acceptance of Slovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria sealed the Black Sea and lent direct access to Ukraine. Standing in Moscow, the Soviet breakup looked less like a division of the USSR into its parts than a rapid military, economic, technological, and cultural expansion of Europe toward Russia and her vital breadbasket.

To her southeast, Russia maintained ties with and influence over the newly independent Muslim states. These southern and eastern republics carved out extensive reserves of natural resources, land, military and space installations, and ethnic Russian communities when they left the USSR—much of which still had to transit Russia's south, a geopolitical pivot including Azerbaijan and Chechnya, on its way to

⁸ Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*, 88-89.

foreign markets.⁹ Significantly, these south and eastern republics also took with them 70 million Muslims. Growing to an estimated 100 million by 2007, their addition to Russia's nearly 20 million Muslims would have placed ethnic Russians in the minority and fundamentally altered Russia and her geostrategic position.¹⁰ Furthermore, decades of repression followed by spontaneous freedom, akin to Tsar Alexander II's emancipation of the serfs in 1861, reinvigorated ethnic and religious tensions; a clear, perhaps temporary, Rus majority appeared to contain these tensions to Russia's south.

Internally, Soviet leaders recognized the need for reforms dating back to Khrushchev, but it was Gorbachev who pushed changes further than the system could handle. Gorbachev's aggressive and ill-informed restructuring prevented market forces from taking their natural course; "uncompetitive firms were not allowed to fail or shed redundant employees" while reduced government control in other areas produced unstable prices, wages, and access to goods.¹¹ At the same time, the Chernobyl meltdown, declining oil prices, and the decade-long Afghan war quickly drained government resources.

Recognizing communism not only let them down, but also caused extensive damage to Russia socially, politically, economically, and demographically, Gorbachev and his reformers exposed many of the lies that enabled over seventy years of Soviet rule. His openness campaign, *glasnost*, sent shockwaves through the soviets, which broke apart the union. Boris Yeltsin, appointed by Gorbachev to run the Russian Republic, pushed for liberalization that is more aggressive and rallied the public to challenge both Gorbachev and the Communist Party. After

⁹ Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*, 41; Michael Stuermer, *Putin and the Rise of Russia* (New York, NY: Pegasus, 2010), 118. A geopolitical pivot is a state or region who is geographically important to major global players.

¹⁰ Stuermer, *Putin and the Rise of Russia*, 118-124.

¹¹ Bressler, *Understanding Contemporary Russia*, 76.

winning the “first free presidential election in the Russian” Federation Yeltsin introduced further liberalization, but he, as Gorbachev and the great tsars before him, found forcing top-down Westernization upon an underdeveloped society produced disaster, especially during unforgiving economic conditions.

Economic Trends.

Tsarist Russia was mostly agrarian and largely government controlled with few private land claims. Russia under Bolshevik rule transitioned to a fundamentally socialist economy. Adopting broad concepts from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the Soviet *command* or planned economy sought to eliminate free market economies in their sphere of influence. Unable to eliminate all aspects of Capitalism, Stalin succeeded in essentially eliminating private property through his collectivization campaign and built an industrialized economy strong enough to survive the Second World War.

After Stalin’s death, Khrushchev pushed reforms through erratic changes to increase the availability of consumer goods and housing. Unfortunately, wages remained insufficient to incentivize work and geographical barriers limited his plans for agricultural expansion, while economic stagnation frustrated his designs; Khrushchev’s reforms, as well intended as they may have been, were contextually inappropriate. His successor, Brezhnev, benefitted from increasing gold and oil prices, which altered the economic conditions and set the context for reform. Unfortunately for the USSR, Brezhnev set the Soviet economy up for failure by way of his expensive arms procurements in lieu of social and economic modernization.¹²

Falling oil prices in the first half of the 1980s, followed by the collapse in oil prices in 1986, the increasing cost of their war in

¹² James R. Miller, “The Economy,” in Bressler, *Understanding Contemporary Russia*, 133-138.

Afghanistan, and a nearly myopic focus on defense spending enabled the USSR to maintain its military edge over the United States while succumbing to economic failure.¹³ Taking the helm in 1985, Gorbachev directed rapid changes to the Soviet economy through reforms, *perestroika*, to save socialism by reducing centralization. “As central control of the economy loosened and some private enterprise was encouraged, the system began to unravel.”¹⁴ Disintegration revealed gross inefficiencies, which, without a central command component, undermined production and distribution and produced severe shortages bolstering corruption and a black market. Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin’s response sought to transition to the market economy with strict limits to preserve the Soviet Union by discouraging independence. This top-down opening of the economy with continued political restrictions and an absence of economic protections expanded chasms within the bureaucracy and resulted in the failed coup of 1991.¹⁵

As the first elected President of the Russian Federation, Yeltsin pushed hard and fast for sweeping economic reforms. Under Soviet rule, the Russian Republic’s economy was interdependent with those of the other republics and the central bank was that of the Soviet Union, not Russia. Independence required the rapid establishment of Russian economic institutions as well as factories to produce goods formerly imported as well as trade ties to reestablish commerce. Yeltsin pushed for a *rapid* transition to a free-market economy based on his desires to undo the Soviet Union, halt runaway inflation, and respond to his belief that the populace would not tolerate the protracted pain of a gradual transition.¹⁶

¹³ Oil prices, nominal and real, derived from The World Trade Organization, “B, Natural Resources: Definitions, Trade Patterns and Globalization,” *World Trade Report 2010*.
http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/booksp_e/anrep_e/wtr10-2b_e.pdf

¹⁴ Miller, “The Economy,” 141.

¹⁵ Miller, “The Economy,” 141-143.

¹⁶ Miller, “The Economy,” 144-147.

The Russian people and infrastructure were not ready for this shocking transition away from a command economy, and the oversight and legal mechanisms did not exist to adequately protect the consumer, minimize corruption, and prevent racketeering by greedy jackals. In an effort to stabilize the economy, Yeltsin attempted to freeze wages and prices, but was unable. Within a year, the government printed more money, fell for unfavorable loans, and distributed vouchers, all of which furthered inflation.

While not rapid, as Yeltsin had wished, Russia's new market-based economy took shape. After his reelection in 1996, positive indicators increased until Russia's economy once again met with catastrophe. The gradual decline of oil prices from 1990 to 1998 undermined Yeltsin's reforms and increased national debt, but a final drop in oil and gas prices ultimately lead Russia to default on its International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans and reform its budgeting and debt policies. These latest economic reforms, aided by recovering oil prices, enabled the Russian economy to make a comeback beginning in 1999, which continued through Putin's first presidency.¹⁷

This cursory review of the Russian economy revealed several paradoxes: first, Soviet and Russian leaders recognized the need for economic reforms, but misapplied them—top-down liberalization as well as the introduction of drastic changes during economic slowdowns. Second, the price of oil determined the success of the Russian economy. When oil revenues dropped in 1985, 1998, and 2008, Russia's national leadership changed and attempted reforms to remedy the economy, only to face a shortage of resources. Third and differentiating Russia from the West, centralization worked to reduce corruption and stabilize the economy in Russia, but limited economic potential. Russia can overcome each of these paradoxes with education, economic diversification, and

¹⁷ Miller, "The Economy," 141-154.

legal reforms as the Meiji did in Japan, but she cannot remedy her dwindling workforce from the top—the next critical component of a stable or growing economy.

Demographics.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union the Russian population began a rapid decline. Considering a large population a point of historical strength, Kremlin leadership implemented programs to reverse this trend. In addition to lower births, Russians believed they lost more people than they needed to through a brain drain to the West, while a growing immigrant population, which was mostly Muslim, conjured images reminiscent of Mongol and Turkic invasions. Population shifts and changes affect such large changes on nations and states as to justify their own specialty: demographics.

The science of demographics assess current and historical population numbers, ages, cultures, gender equilibrium, physical distribution and other statistics to inform estimates about future populations. A myriad of variables compete to explain fluctuations and trends. These informed demographic trends are not certain, but rather an informed guess. The closer the timeline is, the greater the chance of the prediction holding true: for example, looking out twenty years one can estimate the size of a workforce with high fidelity as all participant currently exist and history informed mortality trends for that age group in that country. One cannot predict, with much certainty, how many children future generations will produce, or their level of employability.

Ever since the rapid population growth in Russia at the end of the eighteenth century, Russian leaders tied their great power status to expansive territory, the vast resources it contained, *and* the enormous population. It takes people to make a state and Russia's growing population provided the laborers who sustained the government and the military. "Russia's population was consistently mobilized and deployed

in the service of the state through serfdom, collectivization, the gulag, and mass military conscription, to generate tax revenues, develop a vast agricultural base, build industrial capital on a massive scale from scratch, and expand and defend the world's largest country with continent-wide frontiers."¹⁸

The Soviet Union's massive population contributed to victory in WWII and subsequent superpower status until the decisions of the state undermined one of their sources of power. After a protracted revolution, two world wars, several failed smaller wars, and internal decimation from purges, food shortages, and a failing infrastructure Russia's once voluminous population declined. By the end of the Cold War, the Russian population stood at slightly under 152 million.¹⁹ The latest UN statistics capped the population at 147 million in 2010.²⁰ Focusing on the working age population, the UN predictions forecast a further 20 percent loss by 2030 and 40 percent loss by 2050.²¹

¹⁸ Fiona Hill, "Dinner with Putin: Musings on the Politics of Modernization in Russia," The Brookings Institute, October 2010. http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2010/10_russia_putin_hill.aspx

¹⁹ UN, "Population By Age of Both Sexes, Annual 1950-2010 Database," New York, NY: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, Population Estimates and Projections Division. http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Excel-Data/DB04_Population_ByAgeSex_Annual/WPP2010_DB4_F1A_POPULATION_BY_AGE_BOTH_SEXES_ANNUAL_1950-2010.XLS, concept from Martin C. Libicki, Howard J. Shatz, Julie E. Taylor, *Global Demographic Change and Its Implications for Military Power* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2011). <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG1091>

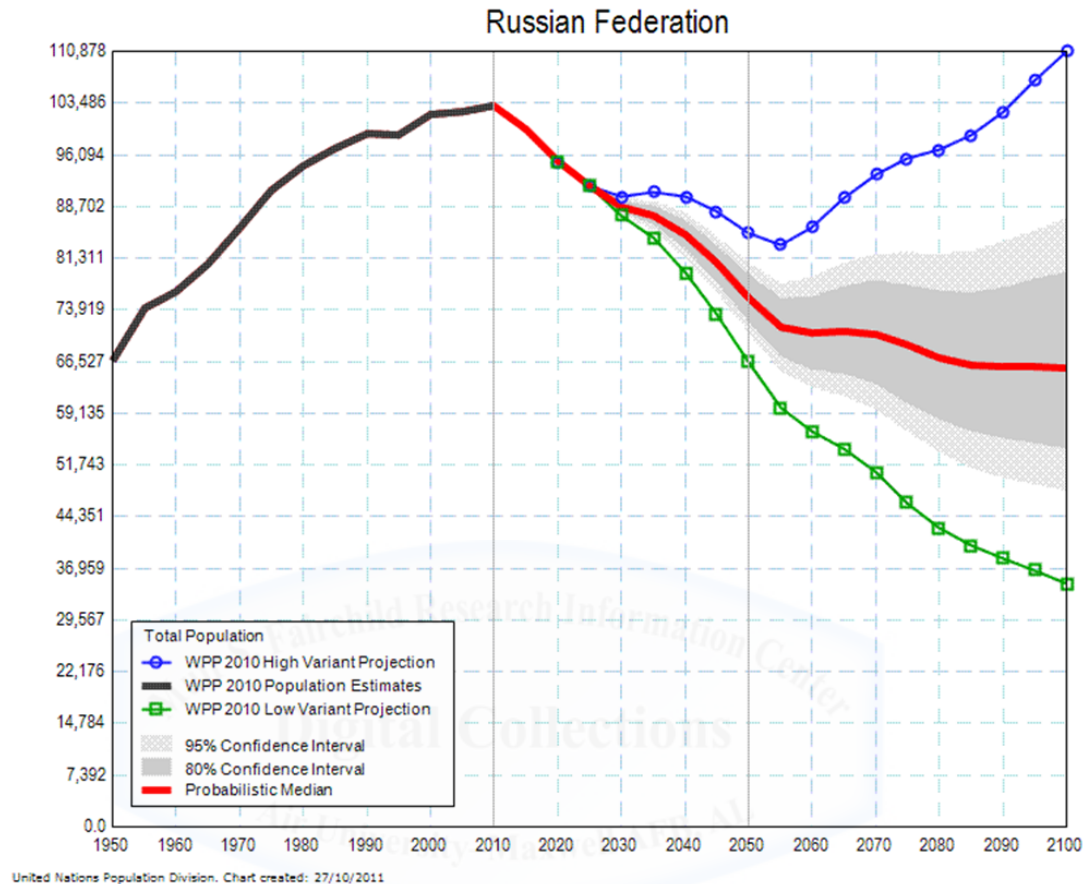
²⁰ UN, "Population By Age."

²¹ UN, "Population By Age."

Figure 1. Projections of Russian Population

Probabilistic Projections: Population age 15-64 years (thousands)

Population projections based on probabilistic projections of total fertility from the 2010 Revision



Source: UN, "Population projections using probabilistic projections of total fertility and life expectancy at birth, based on a Bayesian Hierarchical Model (BHM)," New York, NY: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2010): (internal data set updated 26 October 2011) http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/P-WPP/htm/PWPP_Population-Age_15-64.htm

The workforce of 2030 already exists, although its future employability is unknown. Studies with forecasts beyond 2030 identify the collapse of the Soviet Union and its healthcare and public works infrastructure as causal to a decline in the number of Russian babies born between 1988 and 2000; a decline far greater than that of the

1960s.²² The resultant lower number of potential mothers is just now reaching childbearing age and their rate of reproduction is unknown.²³

Beginning in 2004, the Brookings Institute's Director of the Center on the United States and Europe, Fiona Hill, attended annual meetings with President Putin and other Russia experts. In her written summary from the 2010 meetings, she commented at length on the anticipated continuance of Russia's population decline, especially among the working ages. She repeated previous estimates, but opined the number is less important than the quality. "Russia no longer 'needs' the mass manpower of the past either to be economically competitive or to remain a major global player."²⁴ Russia's revenues predominantly flow from its energy sector, which employs only two percent of the current workforce. To broaden the economy and develop a competitive high-technology sector, Russia requires "a highly educated and healthy population."²⁵

Quality and access to education and healthcare directly affect Russia's national objective of diversifying their economy, but so does retention of the educated population. Some Russia experts point to the post-Soviet departure of many Russians to Western Europe and the United States as a "brain drain" undermining Russia's development. Fiona Hill identified discrepancies in the data on who left Russia and countered Russian claims of a "brain drain" as "anecdotal" despite the 2010 Nobel Prize for Physics going to two Russian-born scientists who migrated to the UK.²⁶

As Russians of all capabilities departed their homeland, immigrants from former Soviet republics moved in. The influx of ethnically non-Rus exacerbated concerns over the decrease in the Rus'

²² UN, "Population By Age."

²³ Hill, "Dinner with Putin."

²⁴ Hill, "Dinner with Putin."

²⁵ Hill, "Dinner with Putin."

²⁶ Hill, "Dinner with Putin."

population and reinforced the perception of invasion. Historically aware, post-Soviet Russian leaders likely envisioned the reemergence of the Golden Horde and sought to retain and lure back Russians. As president and then prime minister, Putin highlighted changes within the Russian system in an attempt to entice “highly-skilled ‘expats’ to Russia from Europe [and America] to off-set the large scale migration of low-skilled workers from Central Asia.”²⁷

Capturing this Russian fear of invasion, Putin biographer Michael Stuermer noted, “In Kazan, from time immemorial the point of entry for Asian hordes into Europe, a Muslim reconquest is being announced to the Russians – but also, if they care to listen, to the peoples further west. This reversal of history is counted not in years but in generations, and it has only just started.”²⁸ Neil Howe and Richard Jackson captured this fear on a Eurasian scale in “Battle of the (Youth) Bulge,” where they associate the burgeoning Muslim population and declining non-Muslim population with a “dangerous new security threat.”²⁹

To reverse this negative population trend within the Russian population, Presidents Putin and Medvedev instituted incentives for women to have more than one child—a program they highlight as a success.³⁰ The authors of a recent RAND study on demographic changes remarked: “Russia is commonly described as a demographic basket case, with low fertility rates and startlingly short life spans (particularly for men).”³¹ Trends capture a short interval and often change.

²⁷ Hill, “Dinner with Putin.”

²⁸ Stuermer, *Putin and the Rise of Russia*, 6.

²⁹ Neil Howe and Richard Jackson, “Battle of the (Youth) Bulge,” *The National Interest*, no. 96 (July/August 2008): 1; also quoted in Libicki, Shatz, and Taylor, *Global Demographic Change and Its Implications for Military Power*.

³⁰ Hill, “Dinner with Putin”; “Prime Minister Vladimir Putin Delivers His Report on the Government’s Performance in 2011 to the State Duma,” *Government of The Russian Federation* official website, April, 11, 2012. <http://premier.gov.ru/eng/events/news/18671/> (Accessed 9 May, 2012)

³¹ Libicki, Shatz, and Taylor, *Global Demographic Change and Its Implications for Military Power*, 2.

Historically, Russia had one of the smaller populations in Europe—largely due to the difficulty in sustaining life. Starting in 1750, Russia's population grew rapidly. Dramatic increases occurred despite years of bad harvest, matching periods of government reforms and territorial expansion. The most notable population growth occurred in the last half of the nineteenth century. During this period of geographic expansion – when no peoples were conquered – the Russian population grew “from 68 million in 1850 to 124 million in 1897 and 170 million in 1914.”³² Bounded by the Crimean War and World War I, this period included several reforms to emancipate serfs, spread justice, and strengthen the tsar as well as the Second Opium War, a Polish revolt, the Russo-Japanese war, and a growing peasant movement.

If Russia's population begins to increase, they will have a marked advantage over Europe, Japan, and China where higher life expectancies and older populations will likely burden national resources. Additionally, Russia has the land and resources to support a significant population increase. Historical precedence suggests Russia can rapidly turn their current demographic woes into national strength. Their fastest growth rate (1850-1914) paralleled social reforms similar to those called for today.

At present, Russia's population is in decline, but not necessarily catastrophic. State revenue depends on a sector employing two percent of the workforce and a historical precedence exists for the Russian population to rebound rapidly. One pocket of Russian government resistant to, but in need of, reform is their military. Declining numbers of potential soldiers and tightening budgets from a smaller working class will force change on this bastion of Russian strength prior to any population rebound.

³² Richard Pipes and with a new foreword to the second edition by the author, *Russia under the Old Regime*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Penguin [Non-Classics], 1997), 13.

Residual Military Capacity.

The Soviet Union shared the title of global superpower with the United States supported by the external perception of both possessing the capability to dominate their sphere of influence and potentially besting each other militarily: the former through quantity, the latter through technology and the geographic advantage of standoff distance. When the Soviet Union fragmented its immense global military and “the political and economic conditions that permitted and sustained” it also broke apart.³³ Despite the breakup, the Russian Federation inherited the preponderance of the Soviet territory, military capabilities, and all of her nuclear weapons. Potentially advantageous, Russia’s military inheritance included a demand for people and capital no longer available as well as a force, equipment, and doctrine inappropriate for the shaping operations soon required of it.

Continent-wide territory was nothing new for Russia. The warrior Tsar Peter the Great formed a successful standing army that went beyond defending Russia’s borders to expanding them. Since the days of Peter, a large and powerful standing army shaped Russian history, furthered her holdings, and became ingrained in the nation’s culture, identity, and expectations. The post-Soviet population decline challenged these expectations. The manpower of the Russian military was preemptively cut almost in half in 1992 and then continued its decline from nearly 4 million in 1990 to 1.1 million by 2004; the decline in the number of suitable conscripts declined at a rate unable to sustain the remaining force.³⁴

Declining population and funds often prove insufficient motivators to trigger deep institutional reforms in bureaucracies; those at the head of such organizations often risk losing their benefits and power through

³³ Steven E. Miller and Dmitri Trenin, eds., *The Russian Military: Power and Policy* (New York, NY: MIT Press, 2004), 1.

³⁴ Miller and Trenin, *The Russian Military*, 218.

restructuring. Acknowledging bureaucracies resist change by design, author Stephen Peter Rosen recognized military innovation takes a long time to occur and often occurs in peacetime. One of the reasons he highlighted for maintaining the status quo was a tendency for senior officers to promote people with similar views. "Control over the promotion of officers is the source of power in the military," so innovation requires acknowledgment by those at the top for change.³⁵ "Because of the time necessary for young officers to be promoted to senior rank, the practical side of the innovation typically took a generation to accomplish."³⁶

With a slightly different view, Barry R. Posen lent greater credence to the stability of bureaucracies, such as the massive Russian military, when he argued it takes a maverick on the inside pined with external political forces to affect change.³⁷ An American example which supported his argument, albeit twenty years after he opined his theory, was the Congressional support afforded General David Petraeus and the external pressure they placed on "Big Army" to try something new. Posen tied political support to balance of power theory, suggesting it is a concern over the military's inability to counter a perceived threat that triggers intervention. Identifying the principle threat as domestic, and perhaps economic, neither Gorbachev nor Yeltsin pushed for military reforms, instead avoiding conflict with their general staff in return for military support.³⁸ In a position resembling that of the Weimar Republic of post-World War I Germany, Gorbachev and Yeltsin lacked widespread support, so they turned to the powerful and stable military, "which [in post WWI Germany and post-Cold War Russia] survived defeat and

³⁵ Stephen Peter Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (New York, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 20, 76, 105.

³⁶ Rosen, *Winning the Next War*, 58.

³⁷ Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany Between the World Wars* (New York, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 233.

³⁸ Miller and Trenin, *The Russian Military*, 220.

revolution and remained a concrete center of power amidst political disintegration.”³⁹

Posen also linked military structure to geography over technological changes or actual performance in battle. After 1991, Russia maintained vast tracks of land with few natural borders. Southern steppes, the vastness of Siberia, and their shallow western front each demanded hordes of troops or thousands of tactical nuclear weapons and fast equipment to respond to a potential incursion by the Caucasians, Chinese, or NATO—as farfetched as those threats appear to an outsider. In fact, Russia’s fledgling neighbor states found themselves besieged by liberation or national insurgencies beginning in 1990 in response to what was in essence decolonization.

Russian opportunities to shape nationalist movements began with Afghanistan from 1978 to 1992. The Russian military had not developed a robust counterinsurgency force by 1990 when tasked to support ethnic Russian combatants in Moldova. This engagement, which lasted in 1992, was the first of many nationalist movements in former Soviet republics driven by cultural differences, such as language, religion, lifestyle, and ethnicity, combined with a newfound freedom of action.

After Moldova, civil war erupted in Tajikistan in 1992 as well as nationalist conflicts in Croatia, Afghanistan, Georgia and Abkhazia, Nagorno and Karabakh, and Bosnia that same year. The conflict in Chechnya began in 1994 and Kosovo followed suit in 1996. Opportunities to intervene and further Russian influence and desires through an application of light counterinsurgency advisors, government support, and potential stability operations were missed as Yeltsin applied

³⁹ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1981), 109.

his conventional Cold War force to crush opposition; often unsuccessfully.⁴⁰

The extent to which the rapid victory by the American Cold War force in Operation Desert Storm in 1991 influenced Yeltsin is unknown, but he was aware of the events and their sweeping results. Engagement by Russian troops in shaping operations under Gorbachev and Yeltsin misapplied the force and techniques similar to those used in Desert Storm while adding personal attacks such as robbery, rape, and murder often associated with unprofessional forces. They produced little success and extensive damage, physically and politically.

At the end of 1994, President Yeltsin sent heavy-handed Russian forces into Grozny, Chechnya to counter nationalist calls for independence. “During the initial battle of Grozny Russia made extensive use of air power, including carpet-bombing” mass arrests, looting and indiscriminate violence.⁴¹ In his study of *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, Stathis N. Kalyvas deduced that indiscriminate violence “may work for a dictator,” but was unlikely to work in countering separatist or insurgents, “where the presence of a rival makes defection possible.”⁴²

Indiscriminate violence unified rebels and the population against the Russians. Military barbarism led the population, ethnic Russians included, transferring support to the irredentist. Major terrorist events, such as the Budennovsk hospital hostage crisis, and the Russian military’s indiscriminately lethal responses pushed “President Boris

⁴⁰ Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, and Beth Grill, *Victory Has a Thousand Fathers: Detailed Counterinsurgency Case Studies* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Publishing, 2010).

⁴¹ William Thomson, “The Process of Islamic Radicalization in Intra-State Conflict: Insurgent Grievance and Leadership in the First Chechen War and the Tajik Civil War,” *Small Wars Journal*, September 16, 2011, 4. <http://smallwarsjournal.com/sites/default/files/857-thomson.pdf>; Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns* (New York, NY: Princeton University Press, 2011), 132.

⁴² Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 143.

Yeltsin ... into a cease fire agreement and a plan for withdrawing Russian forces” from Chechnya.⁴³ What Russia needed was a competent counter terrorism force, if not a counter insurgency force and better weapons surety.

One of the contributing factors to the increase in irredentist movements on Russia’s new borders was the availability of weapons from the Soviet collapse. While insurgencies previously depended on an external supporter for resources, propaganda, and sanctuary, the collapse of the USSR emboldened groups with grievances by flooding the black market with Soviet equipment and sanctuaries in the form of newly independent states. Insurgency expert John Mackinlay identified the post-Cold War military drawdowns as enabling for irredentists who suddenly gained access to modern weapons, which they used for plunder and rebellion.⁴⁴ One area where the Russian Federation and the United States cooperated militarily to reduce the availability of Soviet weapons was through accountability and containment of nuclear weapons.

“In 1991, the Soviet Union deployed 6,411 warheads on land-based ICBMs, 2,932 on submarines, and 1,329 on bombers” when Gorbachev and US President George H.W. Bush signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START).⁴⁵ Implementation of START reduced the number of fielded strategic warheads to 6,000 and the number of launch platforms to 1,600. To aid Russian efforts to recover the estimated 30,000 nuclear warheads in former Soviet Republics, including 3,200 strategic nuclear warheads, US legislators passed and funded the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program to secure or dismantle these

⁴³ Dianne Leigh Sumner, “Success of Terrorism In War: The Case of Chechnya” (Thesis, Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, September 1999), 70. <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ada354487>

⁴⁴ John Mackinlay, *The Insurgent Archipelago: from Mao to Bin Laden* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2010), 28-29.

⁴⁵ Miller and Trenin, *The Russian Military*, 185.

weapons outside of the new Russian Federation.⁴⁶ This permitted recovery of strategic nuclear weapons from Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus and cooperative agreements to reduce the other weapons of mass destruction (WMD)—reducing the opportunity for such weapons to enter the global market.

Nuclear weapons were not the only concern for proliferation of WMD from former Soviet states. The USSR built extensive stores of chemical and biological weapons. A 2007 US Department of Defense report on the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program revealed a program to incinerate over two million nerve agent munitions at one site alone.⁴⁷ The American legislation and funds did not trade money for weapons, but rather provided equipment, expert teams, and accountability to reduce, dismantle, consolidate, and secure WMD to preclude their acquisition by terrorist or undesirable actors.

Outside of their cooperation on WMD, Russia painted NATO and the US as the persistent enemy. NATO's eastward expansion did little to quell these fears, but what stoked the fire were the two NATO-led wars in the former Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia literally translates as the southern land of the Slavs, a historic point of emergence for Russian Slavs as well as a model communist state under Tito. Although Yeltsin provided support in many forms and sent Russian delegations to negotiate an end to the conflict, Russia was unable to hedge or impede NATO intervention in their own back yard. Two months before Putin became the prime minister Russia's military leadership sent peacekeeping forces into a sector of Kosovo and seized the airfield in Pristina, undermining Putin's

⁴⁶ Togzhan Kassenova, and Toby Dalton, "Celebrating 20 Years of Nunn-Lugar, With Questions About the Future," Carnegie Endowment for Peace, December 12, 2011. <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/12/12/celebrating-20-years-of-nunn-lugar-with-questions-about-future/8kss>

⁴⁷ Defense Threat Reduction Agency, *Fiscal Year (FY) 2008/FY 2009 Budget Estimates: Former Soviet Union Threat Reduction*, (Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, February 2007). http://comptroller.defense.gov/defbudget/fy2008/budget_justification/pdfs/01_Operation_and_Maintenance/O_M_VOL_1_PARTS/29_CTR.pdf

foreign policy plans, frustrating NATO efforts, and sparking an order from NATO Commander, General Wesley Clark, to attack the Russian force. Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed in the form of a stand-down order from General Mike Jackson.⁴⁸

While the Russian Federation benefited from her inheritance of the massive Soviet military, it proved unwieldy, expensive, unsustainable, and unsuited for attainment of contemporary political objectives and defense against modern threats. An expansive high technology and nuclear force required money for upkeep and large numbers of conscripts; neither of which the new Russia had. Although Russia's military burdened a struggling economy and was unable to counter NATO expansion under Yeltsin, the political and policy support the General Staff lent the administration undoubtedly aided in stabilizing a nation who culturally respects, if not expects, a strong military whose message matches that of the government. While slightly smaller, Russia's military remained a major Eurasian power and global nuclear power on par with the United States.⁴⁹

Conclusion - Global Influence.

Samuel Huntington concluded, "The lesson of Russian history is that the centralization of power is the prerequisite to social and economic reform."⁵⁰ While culturally Russians expect a strong head of state, Huntington missed the importance of context captured in this chapter. Khrushchev and Gorbachev both held centralized power, but the reforms of the former were contextually tenable, while those of the latter were not. Forcing even greater changes than his predecessor did, even Yeltsin's reforms might have taken off had the Russian internal lines of

⁴⁸ "Singer James Blunt 'prevented World War III'," *BBC News*, 14 November 2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-11753050> and Thomas Gomart, "Russian Civil-Military Relations: Is There Something New With Medvedev?," in Blank, *Civil-Military Relations in Medvedev's Russia*, 89.

⁴⁹ Miller and Trenin, *The Russian Military*, 2.

⁵⁰ Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, 141.

communication been more efficient, the social infrastructure more up to date, the prices of oil and grain stable, and the changes implemented gradually.⁵¹

Gorbachev, like Peter the Great, recognized just how far behind his empire had fallen and took steps to modernize it from the top. Similarly, many of the reforms were inappropriate without a major reordering of society and its infrastructure. Russian culture and governance fundamentally differs from that of the West—Peter acknowledged this, Gorbachev did not. Yeltsin enabled some social reordering when he further liberalized the remnants of an empire, but the results were unfavorable. Neither Gorbachev nor Yeltsin lived up to the great tsars. The new Russia experienced a dwindling economy and neglected infrastructure, a plummeting population held afloat by culturally different immigrants, and a military too expensive to maintain economically, unable to supply with recruits, and ill-suited for the political objectives assigned.

As Joseph S. Nye Jr. opined, “Many Russian futures are possible.”⁵² There are those who latch on to post-Cold War negative trends and predict a linear decline in population and global standing based on rampant corruption, underinvestment in social infrastructure, and a narrow energy-based economy, which may lead to the “oil curse.”⁵³ At the other extreme are those who recognize Russia’s residual hard power, a growing global demand for energy, moves toward reform by the Kremlin, and a strong national leader at the helm; conjuring visions of a

⁵¹ Stephen Blank and Richard Weitz, eds., *The Russian Military Today and Tomorrow: Essays in Memory of Mary Fitzgerald* (Carlisle, PA: SSI, 2010), 73. Demonstrating the level of centralized power held by the last year of Yeltsin’s presidency, his Army Chief of Staff launched a military takeover within NATO occupied Kosovo without any authority except from the president himself.

⁵² Joseph S. Nye, *The Future of Power* (New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2011), 170.

⁵³ Richard M. Auty, *Sustaining Development in Mineral Economies: The Resource Curse* (Thesis, London: Routledge, 1993). The oft-used phrase ‘oil curse’ is a derivative of Richard M. Auty’s “resource curse” as presented in his 1993 thesis.

strong Russia under a determined tsar—a Russian version of Machiavelli's ideal prince.



Chapter 3

Moves Toward Resurgence I

After decades of decline, ambiguity, growing corruption, and unstable governments, Russia received her Prince. The loyal and cunning Putin rocketed to the Presidency from the Saint Petersburg crowd with impeccable timing. Following on the heels of instability and declining commodities prices, he presented strong, almost authoritarian leadership, exerted international political and military pressure, and benefited from recovering energy prices to stabilize the country, begin reversing negative trends, and recover international prestige.

Putin – Saving The State

Vladimir Putin's ascendancy occurred under Soviet rule, leading some to label him as one who desired a return to the communist era: this was not the case. A true patriot from his earliest days, Putin watched his native empire fall behind and then collapse under communism from his assignment in East Germany. Internal failure and dissolution of the USSR demonstrated to an ever more powerful Putin the injurious nature of communism. Similarly, Putin witnessed the negative effects of Yeltsin's rapid capitalistic and democratic experiment and deemed it unfit for Russia. Culturally and historically aware, Putin recognized the need for Russia to move forward, but preferred the term "vertical democracy" to describe his plan to modernize Russia while reinforcing her traditional strengths and recovering her international prestige.

Among Russia's inherent strengths are her vast natural resources. Extensive forests, oil, natural gas, and minerals provide the Russian economy with ample products, but tie economic performance to the highly variable commodities market. Aware of the catastrophic effects rapid declines in energy prices had on all aspects of Russia in 1986 and 1998, Putin silently employed a three-part strategy to stabilize this vital

sector. He transferred much of the energy industry from the private sector to government control, built global credit and economic reserves to dampen perturbations in revenues, and diversification of the Russian economy.

The Russians socially and culturally love a tragedy, and Putin's was his challenge to save the sinking Russian Federation. Lacking contemporary examples, he looked to the great tsars. Putin biographer Michael Stuermer noted, "His dreams come from the Russian pre-Soviet past, garnished with some aspects of the West's European enlightenment."¹ The busts of Peter the Great, Catherine the Great, Nicholas I, and Alexander II adorned his Kremlin office while the finest automobiles and classical furnishings from Europe replicated Catherine's flourishing western style.²

Catherine the Great lauded those in Europe who praised her, while her forefather, Peter the Great, looked to Europe only to learn and take from it that which made Russia stronger and no more. Putin sides with Peter in this respect. Looking West for strength, and an enemy, culturally astute Putin chose Russia's future from a myriad of options. Had he believed liberal democracy, free-market capitalism, or socialism offered the greatest chance to restore lost power and glory to Russia he would have implemented it.

Marxist-Leninism greatly injured the Russian Empire leading socialism under Gorbachev to obliterate it, albeit unintentionally. Yeltsin's rapid capitalization produced great instability, national weakness, and reduced qualities of life. What remained was autocracy in a uniquely Russian form as executed by the tsars—a struggle between absolute control from the top to direct and moderate change without the chaos of recent reforms and pressure to modernize. Viewed through the

¹ Michael Stuermer, *Putin and the Rise of Russia* (New York, NY: Pegasus, 2010), 17.

² Stuermer, *Putin and the Rise of Russia*, 44-45.

lens of Aristotle's students, Putin's vision appeared Epicurean instead of Platonic, Spartan rather than Athenian—geo-culturally and contextually adapted. "Putin would probably call it enlightened absolutism, administered by the elite corps of the intelligence service."³

Many in the West hoped the collapse of the Soviet Union would result in the rapid spread of liberal democracy. This hope lacked depth of understanding. Bressler noted, "One of the paradoxes of liberal democracy is that although the rule of law places strict limits on the power of the state, liberal democracy cannot survive without a strong state."⁴ Widespread corruption, including in the judicial system, precludes implementation of a legitimate rule-of-law-based society, a balanced government, transparent institutions to protect and promote each social and occupational sector, and civic trust in government.

Adding to internal distrust is the Russian government's structure. A hodgepodge of reforms added elected bodies, including a presidency, onto a constitution from the Brezhnev era, without a clear delineation of authorities and responsibilities. After the 1993 government breakdown, the legislature approved a new constitution, which kept the semi-presidential construct, but favored a powerful president, unbalanced government, and power distribution more closely aligned with an autocracy. As with an insurgency, cleaves in political control fostered a competition for legitimacy among the governed.

After more than a decade of turbulence and attempts at reforms, the Russian populace wanted a strong president and government to right the ship. They voted along this line when they elected Putin in March of 2000. In the strategic communication *Russia at the Turn of the Millennium*, "Putin vowed a return to normalcy" through a process of first stabilizing the government, and then prudently leveraging developments

³ Stuermer, *Putin and the Rise of Russia*, 17.

⁴ Michael L. Bressler, ed., *Understanding Contemporary Russia* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishing, 2009), 92.

from Gorbachev and Yeltsin to yield a productive future aligned with Russian interests and actualities.⁵ In reality, he used the velvet hammer of political appointments to further his span of control.

After modifying the rules for who could fill seats in the Legislature, Putin acquired “direct control over the regions through the creation of seven federal superior districts under the supervision of plenipotentiaries who answered only to him.”⁶ Finally, he changed the rules making governors presidential appointees as opposed to elected officials, took control of the national media, pushed legislation that placed the Duma on his side and cracked down on political meddling by wealthy oligarchs.

Reigning in the vocal über-rich undermined political competition as well as afforded opportunities to nationalize portions of the lucrative energy sector upon which Russian ascendance or descent relied. Putin also encouraged small business, benefited from climbing energy prices, and increased exports. Not everything was rosy. Barriers to ownership and transfer of private property added to fears of mistreatment, stemming from Putin’s rough handling of foreign oil corporations, to deter foreign investment. “Russia’s leaders and the Russian public are reluctant to encourage foreign ownership of Russian land and industries out of an age-old fear of foreign domination” despite its potential to foster growth, create jobs, and diversify the petro-economy.⁷

Working on his doctoral degree provided Putin with an awareness of the dynamic nature of commodities.⁸ As a mechanism to dampen market fluctuations, he created a series of stabilizers by establishing cheap credit, stoking the national reserves, and controlling information

⁵ Bressler, *Understanding Contemporary Russia*, 110.

⁶ Bressler, *Understanding Contemporary Russia*, 111.

⁷ James R. Miller. “The Economy,” in *Understanding Contemporary Russia*, ed. Michael L. Bressler, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishing, 2009), 157.

⁸ It is supposedly a common practice in Russia to pay a writer to prepare your dissertation, if you can afford it. Critics speculate Putin had insufficient time to fill his government role while writing his thesis and others claim his thesis plagiarized an American energy study; access in now restricted preventing closure.

and the majority of the energy sector during the years of rising energy prices. When the inevitable happened, and oil prices dropped in 2008, Putin was ready. Russians accepted his moves toward autocracy as their living standards increased; the energy price drop and ensuing global recession did not cause collapse as it previously had. “Russia is not a Western style industrial democracy. The country has hidden reserves and stabilizers that will allow Kremlin rulers to control their worries – if they have any. Russian power will not disappear, nor will Russian self-confidence dissipate.”⁹

Dependence on energy sales creates easy revenues in good times, but lacks the stability required by a global powerhouse. As noted in Chapter 2, Putin emphasized external investment and academic reforms in an attempt to prevent a “brain drain”, attract entrepreneurs, and eventually develop a high-technology sector on par with the US. An example of Russia attracting entrepreneurs provided by the president described a Russian expatriate, who immigrated to Russia from California and founded a dairy. Far from high-tech, this example may provide additional insight to the extent of Russia’s brain drain when considered as a red herring to distract from the outflow of professionals.

As the USSR broke apart, many in the intelligence services used their access to acquire great wealth and power. Putin’s consolidation of the energy sector relied on some strategically placed government figures with this background. This trend of reliance on those from the intelligence community suggests Putin may turn to the private sector to begin a dairy, but will likely rely on the intelligence sector to further critical sectors such as the high-tech industry.

In the anarchy that arose from the ashes of the USSR and its broken social contract grew organized crime. “Organized crime is allowed to flourish because of its unacknowledged connection to the security

⁹ Stuermer, *Putin and the Rise of Russia*, xv.

services. Indeed, the distinction between organized criminal networks and the security services that control most Russian ministries and local government is often blurry.”¹⁰ Holding wealth and power, these gangs attracted former members of the Комитет государственной безопасности, or *Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti* (KGB, or Committee for State Security—the Soviet intelligence, state security, and secret police organization) for everything from security to access. As the Internet grew into a global network, these thugs found means to exploit it. They were not alone.

Cyber experts Richard A. Clarke, Robert K. Knake, and Evgeny Morozov acknowledged official Russian hackers and their schools as among the top in the world. Additionally, Morozov captured the Kremlin’s transition away from internet censorship, and toward its use of the cyber world as a conduit for propaganda.¹¹ Where some look at government hacking and blogging as intelligence and advertising, they miss the message of encouragement for the youth to pursue programming and development skills. Morozov focused his critique on the Kremlin encouraging cyber hobbies to steer interests away from politics, but they also developed a broad population of potential workers in a future high-technology industry as well as cybered warriors to defend Russia and conduct her electronic battles.

Military Posturing.

Under Yeltsin, the Russian military plummeted in size, funding, and prestige. Following a series of military blunders and missed opportunities by Yeltsin, Putin used the second Chechnya intervention to “exact revenge, restore Russian morale, and erase the national humiliation of the first conflict. Responding to the public mood, Putin

¹⁰ Richard A. Clarke and Robert K. Knake, *Cyber War: The Next Threat to National Security and What to Do About It* (New York, NY: Ecco, 2010), 16.

¹¹ Evgeny Morozov, *The Net Delusion: the Dark Side of Internet Freedom* (New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2011).

was elected in part on his promises to ‘flush the Chechens down the toilet’” and recover stability.¹² He accomplished this through this “two-pronged policy of limiting the public’s awareness of casualty rates, human rights abuses, and the economic costs of the war through control of the media, and emphasizing the national security aspects of the war.”¹³ The Kremlin controlled the public message and tied military activities to national security, which played to Thucydides’ motivator of fear over honor and interest. In reality, military engagements under Putin held motives of recovering honor in Chechnya, Kosovo, and Estonia, and securing interests in Georgia. Additionally, these military engagements revealed an urgent need for military modernization.

Russia linked events in neighboring Georgia and Chechnya to a broader separatist potential in the Caucasus region. With Caspian gas pipelines traversing the Caucasus, Russia’s soft underbelly provided revenues and power as a cork limiting the outflow of energy from Central Asia. More importantly, the region proved itself a destabilizing menace during and since the first war in Chechnya. From 2000 through 2002, Russian forces fighting in Chechnya captured Georgian towns and launched cross border airstrikes, eventually quelling the majority of the insurrection.¹⁴

Tamping down the insurgency in Chechnya reinforced the need for a modern counterinsurgency force. As before, many factors competed with this requirement. After the second war in Chechnya, and Russia’s involvement in the peacekeeping efforts in the Balkans, Putin’s military faced the reality of a declining number of conscripts, aging equipment, and crumbling infrastructure—a renewed focus on nuclear weapons and

¹² Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns* (New York, NY: Princeton University Press, 2011), 133.

¹³ Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends*, 135.

¹⁴ Steven E. Miller and Dmitri Trenin, eds., *The Russian Military: Power and Policy* (New York, NY: The MIT Press, 2004), 143.

cyber warfare presented an alternative future to a regionally focused counterinsurgency force.

Russian Minister of Defense, Marshal Igor Sergeev, and Chief of the General Staff, Anatoly Kvashnin, presented Putin with opposing options for military reform. Sergeev focused on strategic defense and its nuclear component, where Kvashnin suggested moving the Strategic Missile Force under the Air Force and focus on building competent and robust regional forces to win the wars recently waged. Putin initially sided with Kvashnin, a choice supported by recent experiences, until his archenemy, the United States, inadvertently returned nuclear forces to the forefront. Thereafter, Putin choose a compromise of the two.¹⁵

Putin offset establishment of a US military training mission to Georgia in 2002 with the strategic opportunity afforded by the US decision in December 2001 to withdrawal from the Antiballistic Missile (ABM) treaty. The US exit from ABM enabled Putin to back out of START II without losing significant international prestige, and saved vast quantities of money.¹⁶ This permitted Russia to continue to employ its vast arsenal of Multiple Independently targetable Reentry Vehicles (MIRV) atop Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM) and defer the expensive development and fielding of single-warhead Topol-M missiles. Additionally, despite increasing state revenues, he continued to support US expenditures on the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program to return Soviet WMD to Russia and improve its security. Collectively, these savings enabled increased expenditure on conventional forces.

One should not assume Russian conventional forces thrived as a result. Alternatively, Putin would not have benefited from disbanding the military and starting anew as Peter the Great had. A proven military needed updating, but lacked funds and bodies. Furthermore, Rosen

¹⁵ Miller and Trenin, *The Russian Military*, 186-195.

¹⁶ Miller and Trenin, *The Russian Military*, 188-189.

revealed that military innovation takes a long time and often occurs in peacetime; persistent military involvement expended most of the Russian military's resources and deferred sweeping change. This operational tempo excuse, for limiting changes to minor tweaks, makes sense of the scant blowback generated from military failure to achieve political objectives in Chechnya in 1996. Under Putin, changes remained minor, with an apparent reshuffling to prevent development of "potential political challengers rather than" a reorienting to ensure national defense.¹⁷

Putin reinvigorated "the Leninist notion of constant threats from abroad and within," while adapting his military to Russian national limitations. Moving more aggressively in his second term as president, Putin appointed another of the St. Petersburg reformers to Minister of Defense, Anatoly Serdyukov, and two months prior to the cyber war against Estonia. Serdyukov previously reformed the substantial revenue service and faced a similar task of heavily reforming the Ministry of Defense. Clearly defined enemies abroad and at home plus economic, social, and personnel limitations guided this career businessman in identifying reforms.

Serdyukov formulated a plan to address four deficiencies: close "the technology gap" with their Western enemies; empower "lower-level officers to exercise authority" and develop a professional non-commissioned officer corps; attack corruption; and address the recruitment problem by "making the military career more attractive," thereby enabling a transition away from the unsustainable conscript force.¹⁸ By the end of Putin's second term, reforms progressed little. The 2008 war against Georgia produced a victory for Russia, but openly

¹⁷ Miller and Trenin, *The Russian Military*, 56-62.

¹⁸ Miller and Trenin, *The Russian Military*, 7-8.

spotlighted the urgent need to focus less on countering NATO and more on development of a counterinsurgency and counterterror force.

Stephen J. Blank, Richard Weitz, and Dale R. Herspring captured the predominant belief that transitioning the Russian conventional force into a light expeditionary professional force will take a decade or more.¹⁹ Declining resources and an entrenched senior staff limited the rate of modernization. Furthermore, firings and conventional drawdowns progressively placed nuclear weapons at the forefront of a Russian military response.

Daniel Gouré's research on the subject revealed an increased role for Russian nuclear weapons to include deterring traditional and conventional threats, de-escalating most conflicts involving major combat operations, and as "an all-purpose [first-strike] instrument" to compensate for a shrinking conventional capacity.²⁰ This nuclear cure-all appears irrational to many in the West while mimicking NATO's Cold War statements. In the end, nuclear weapons continue to garner their greatest value as political weapons. Potential value remains against invading hordes, massive fielded armies, and for retaliation against a WMD attack—each unlikely at the present. Nonetheless, as Russian demographic, resources, and serviceable weapons trended down, Putin clung to his remaining nuclear weapons and their potential deterrent value.

Determinism.

For deterrence to work, one must present a credible threat, a demonstrated will to employ said threat, and a desired audience who link the two and respond as desired. Thomas C. Schelling captured the balance in *Arms and Influence*, "The power to hurt is bargaining power.

¹⁹ Miller and Trenin, *The Russian Military*.

²⁰ Daniel Goure "Russian Strategic Nuclear Forces and Arms Control: Déjà vu All Over Again," 301-330 in Stephen Blank and Richard Weitz, eds., *The Russian Military Today and Tomorrow: Essays in Memory of Mary Fitzgerald* (Carlisle, PA: SSI, 2010), 301-313

To exploit it is diplomacy.”²¹ Under Putin, Russia’s major strengths were its vast energy reserves, expansive land and all that it contained its strategic nuclear forces, and veto power on the United Nations Security Council. In addition to exerting his will on neighboring former Soviet states, Putin employed energy, territory as a geographical barrier, and UN veto as geopolitical weapons to further foreign and domestic prestige.

Thucydides identified the strongest social motives as “fear, honor, and interest;” Machiavelli ranked the conduits to legitimacy of a leader as fear, love, and hate; in both cases holding or expanding one’s power is the objective.²² E.H. Carr divided “international power into three categories: military power, economic power, and power over opinion.”²³ Joseph S. Nye Jr. wrote of an attractive *soft power*, based on credibility and exerted through a pull effect.²⁴ Samuel P. Huntington challenged Nye’s emphasis on the power of attractiveness by explaining that states, or cultures, became attractive when they held “material success and influence. Soft power is power only when it rests on a foundation of hard power. Increases in hard economic and military power produce enhanced self-confidence, arrogance, and belief in the superiority of one’s own culture or soft power.”²⁵

Whichever approach someone believes in depends upon his or her belief of human nature as fundamentally cooperative or individualistic, in terms of “nature or nurture”. Russian history consistently demonstrated a belief in unbounded human nature as bad, from brutal and often tyrannical governments to a cultural fear of internal and external threats. Those who, such as Putin, value hard power and security over

²¹ Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 2.

²² Thucydides, *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, ed. Robert B. Strassler and trans. Richard Crawley (New York, NY: Free Press, 1996), 43; Joseph S. Nye, *The Future of Power* (New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2011), 82.

²³ Nye, *The Future of Power*, 82.

²⁴ Nye, *The Future of Power*, 82-83.

²⁵ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (Boulder, CO: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 92.

liberalism or institutionalism, leverage every opportunity to further their power and prestige.

Low energy costs throughout the late 1980s and 1990s contributed to several European nations deferring, or reversing, moves away from fossil fuels. As environmentalists pushed for the elimination of nuclear power plants and Russians suffered from their dependence on income from devalued commodities, the stage was being set for Russia's return to power. By Putin's second term in office, Russia was again a wealthy country with multi-year energy contracts to several powerful European countries.

Russia's two pipeline shutdowns since 2006 demonstrated Europe's vulnerability, while Iran's recent termination of energy flows to the EU has furthered dependence on Russia. Reductions in European dependence on Russian energy, specifically in Poland, Italy, Spain, Germany, and France would reduce European vulnerability without decimating Russia's economy, thanks to opening energy markets in East Asia.²⁶ Even though the shutdowns were temporary, the message was loud and clear: European dependence on Russian energy handed Putin leverage and power, not to mention wealth. Ramifications of these demonstrations recently surfaced when NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) testified to Congress in 2011, "Russia's energy leverage represents a key factor in European and Eurasian energy security."²⁷

Carnegie Moscow expert Dmitri Trenin disagreed. He viewed "Russo-European energy dependence" as mutual and the shutdowns as

²⁶ Admiral James G. Stavridis, Commander, United States European Command, prepared testimony as delivered before the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, 112th Congress, 2011, *Cong. Rec.* 47. "Russia is one of the most important suppliers of crude oil and natural gas to Europe, accounting for 33% of oil imports and 40% of gas imports (87% for Italy; 81% for Spain; 61% for Germany; and 51% for France). Russia's energy leverage represents a key factor in European and Eurasian energy security".

²⁷ Stavridis, 112th Congress, *Cong. Rec.* 49.

a derivative of Russian subsidies to Ukraine prior to 2005.²⁸ Trenin associated Putin's bursts of determinism with economics, but examples in the following section on the Arctic associated military shows of force and geopolitical acts of defiance with an attempt to regain prestige.

After their war with Georgia, Russia's Black Sea Fleet floated ineptly while US ships supplied aid to Georgia. In response to this American intervention on Russia's southern border, Putin sent two bombers to Venezuela as a show of solidarity against the US. Additionally, Russia spoke out against NATO expansion, US partnerships with Central Asian states, and missile defenses in Poland and the Czech Republic. Beyond rhetoric, Russia's fleet resumed nuclear missile-armed submarine patrols under the Arctic ice in 2009, venturing beyond their Cold War limits.²⁹ Militarily, these patrols, and more recent tests, provided a second-strike capability, although no one was threatening to annihilate Russia.

Remembering Russia's insecurities, their saber rattling presented an image of a nervous but capable schoolyard bully, whose bellicose rants and posture demand attention. An enduring Russian relationship, which flies in the face of Western agenda, is the set of military sales and training agreements with Syria and Iran. This relationship provides Russia with revenue, regional access, a conduit to geopolitically counter the US, and positive relations with states who influence Russia's soft underbelly.

Despite these differences, Putin balanced relations with China, India, France, Germany, and the United States during the first seven years of his presidency, with the noteworthy exception of jointly opposing the US/UK invasion of Iraq. Putin made a large number of state visits to

²⁸ Dmitri Trenin, "Thinking Strategically About Russia," *Foreign Policy for the Next President*, Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 2008, 7.

²⁹ Rob Huebert, *The Newly Emerging Arctic Security Environment* (Calgary, Canada: Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute, 2010), 18.

these countries, clearly marketing himself as the face of Russian success. Finally, at the 2007 Munich Security Conference, the Russian Bear awoke: Putin openly and assertively expressed his frustration with US actions from Kosovo to NATO expansion. Furthermore, he set national redlines and dictated Russian foreign policy in a way, which unequivocally demonstrated he was the sole decision maker for his state.³⁰ From the beginning of his presidency, Putin focused on energy including turning Russia's geopolitical power projection onto the frozen north and its vast energy reserves.

The Arctic.

Russia's recovery under President Putin centered on energy and international prestige. The Siberian Arctic's vast energy reserves and shorter Pacific-Atlantic trade routes placed the Arctic toward the top of Putin's geopolitical agenda; a point evidenced by his heavy diplomatic and military ventures in the region. Russia's increased focus on the Arctic through the UN, bilateral ties, the Arctic Council, and military actions reminiscent of the Cold War caught the attention of the West. In Congressional testimony, SACEUR—who is charged with the collective defense of four of the five circumpolar states—noted, “the prospect of unprecedented access to natural resources and Northern shipping routes has raised related security concerns.”³¹

Even with overt competition in the Arctic, the region is anything but lawless. The third UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III) governs all aspects of states interests in the Arctic as it does on the other oceans.³² The Convention affords states an Exclusive Economic

³⁰ Stuermer, *Putin and the Rise of Russia*.

³¹ Stavridis, 112th Congress, *Cong. Rec.* 48. The five circumpolar states are those with maritime claims in the Arctic: The United States, Canada, The Russian Federation, Norway, and Greenland (Denmark).

“Arctic States” refers to the circumpolar states plus Iceland, and military non-aligned Finland and Sweden.

³² Aspects governed include fishing rights, safe passage, environmental concerns, jurisdiction, and dispute resolution procedures, to name a few.

Zone (EEZ) out to 200 nautical miles from their coast, or half the distance to the shore of a neighboring state if less than 400 nautical miles.³³ An EEZ grants exclusive rights to the resources on and under the zone's seabed. A significant clause adds a maximum additional 150 nautical miles if and where a country can prove this extra seabed is an extension of its continental shelf.³⁴ This does not permit encroachment on a neighbor's EEZ or a neutral zone such as the North Pole. The United States signed, but did not ratify UNCLOS III, while the Russian Federation and the six other Arctic states ratified and complied with the Convention.³⁵

Concurrent with Putin's first election to the Presidency, the price of oil and gas recovered, enabling a renewed focus on their Arctic resources. In December 2001, Russia submitted a petition to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf to expand Russia's EEZ over potentially immense Arctic energy and mineral fields (Figure 2). In his 2002 supporting testimony, the Russian Federation Deputy Minister for Natural Resources claimed the outer limit of the Siberian continental shelf included the majority of the Russian Arctic sector including the Lomonosov ridge, Mendeleev rise, and Alpha ridge.³⁶ The Lomonosov Ridge draws a line between Greenland and Siberia, hosts the neutral North Pole, and is home to a Russian flag planted 14,000 feet below the sea in 2007.³⁷ During the Russian expedition to plant their titanium flag under the North Pole, scientist collected seabed samples in hopes of

³³ United Nations, *Convention on the Law of the Sea*, 53.

http://www.un.org/Depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf

³⁴ United Nations, *Convention on the Law of the Sea*, 53.

³⁵ United Nations, *Status of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*, Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea. http://www.un.org/Depts/los/reference_files/status2010.pdf As of 20 September 2011, there were 162 parties to the Convention.

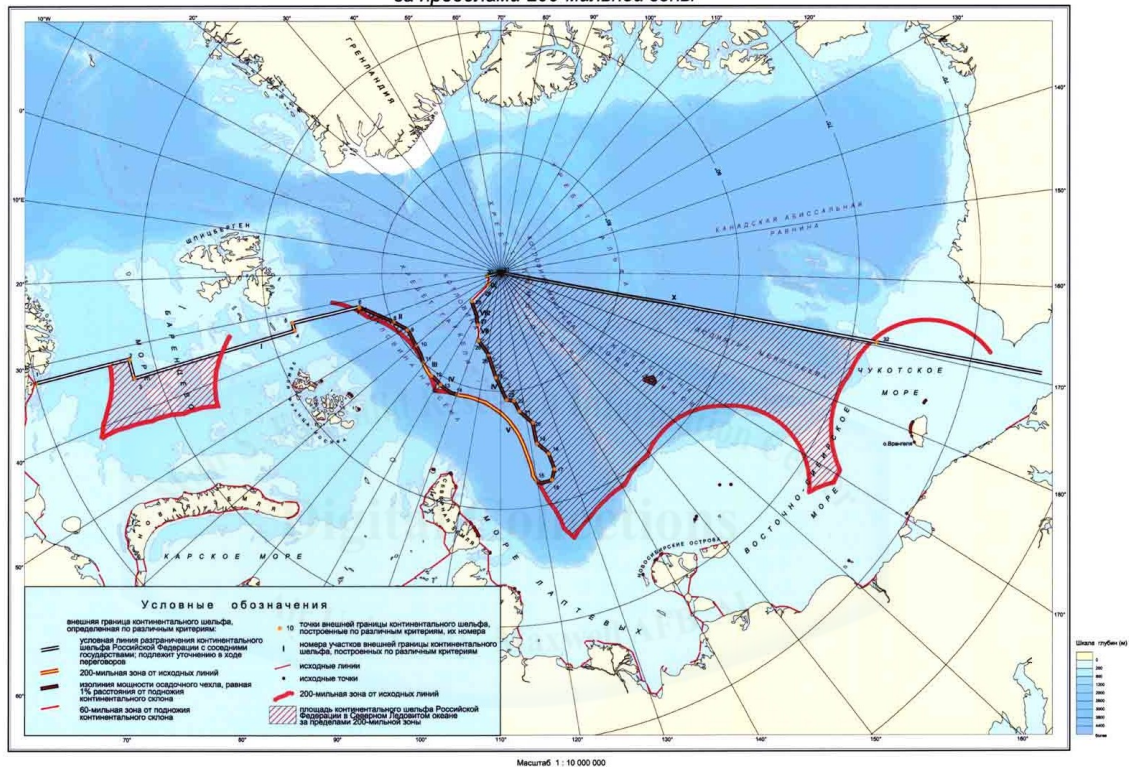
³⁶ United Nations, "Statement made by the Deputy Minister for Natural Resources of the Russian Federation during presentation of the submission made by the Russian Federation to the Commission, made on 28 March 2002," United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, Tenth Session, New York, NY, 25 March-12 April 2002, (UN Doc. CLCS/31, 05 April 2002). <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N02/318/60/PDF/N0231860.pdf?OpenElement>

³⁷ UN, "Statement by Deputy Minister Natural Resources, Russian Federation, made on 28 March 2002."

supporting their claim; it remains unsubstantiated.³⁸ Lacking sufficient proof for their claims and experiencing unprecedented economic growth, Russia began remilitarizing the Arctic.

Figure 2. Russian Federation Arctic Claim Beyond 200 Nautical Miles

Площадь континентального шельфа Российской Федерации в Северном Ледовитом океане за пределами 200-мильной зоны



Source: Russian Federation, “Map 2.” Official submission to the UN depicting expanded Russian Arctic seabed claim in hash marks.

http://www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/rus01/RUS_C_LCS_01_2001_LOS_2.jpg

As the Russian economy recovered, so did their military capability. In 2006, Russia completed the world’s largest and first nuclear-powered icebreaker, *50 YEARS OF VICTORY*.³⁹ In 2007, Russia resumed regular

³⁸ UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, “Ruling As of 11 May 2011,” <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/318/87/PDF/N1131887.pdf?OpenElement>

³⁹ Huebert, *The Newly Emerging Arctic Security Environment*, 17.

polar bomber patrols up to US and Canadian airspace with some reaching Guam and Scotland.⁴⁰ Additionally, Russia planted their flag on the seabed, parachuted scientists and paratroopers on the North Pole, and conducted Arctic military exercises in the name of solidifying their regional claims.⁴¹ Later that year, Putin explained Russia's show of force and remilitarization of the Arctic as a response in kind to the "security threats posed by other military powers."⁴² His message, aimed at NATO, was that the previous fifteen years of limited Russian military activity in the Arctic was due to economic shortfalls, not a lack of interest. Boasting the economy and military to do so, Russia was back as an Arctic power.

To address Russia's Arctic resurgence, circumpolar nations extended an olive branch while modernizing Arctic-capable forces. In 1996, Canada founded the Arctic Council to address "common Arctic issues," excluding "matters related to military security."⁴³ Canadian concerns began with environmental protection and defending their sovereignty. As the rate of polar icecap melt increased in the early 2000s, so did access. Leveraging increased access, Russia exerted her military presence in the Arctic, promoted seasonal shipping, and energy exploration; Canada did not.

Canada's approach of maximizing the Arctic Council to resolve disputes and environmental foci proved effective. Their establishment of non-credible summer military exercises did not. Adding non-security exercises such as search and rescue and disaster response with the

⁴⁰ "Russia Restarts Cold War Patrol," *BBC News*, 17 August 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6950986.stm> [17 September 2010]

⁴¹ John Barlow, "The Cold War in the Arctic," *Current Intelligence*, 29 July 2010, 1. <http://www.cdfai.org/PDF/The%20Cold%20War%20in%20the%20Arctic.pdf>

⁴² BBC News, "Russia Restarts Cold War Patrol."

⁴³ "Declaration on the Establishment of the Arctic Council: The Ottawa Declaration." Ottawa, Canada: Arctic Council, 19 September 1996, 1. <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/about/documents/category/4-founding-documents?download=118:the-ottawa-declaration>

inclusion of Russia would round out the Canadian approach and fit their cooperative, peaceful desires.

The vast number of Arctic energy fields in undisputed Russian waters and their compliance with UNCLOS III undermined the argument of Russian power projection as an attempt to seize additional resources. Rather, actions supported Russian claims of posturing to defend critical Arctic assets. At the same time, Russian Arctic policy calls for expanding military forces to counter the “countries [who] contested Russia’s rights for the resource-rich continental shelf in the Arctic.”⁴⁴ Russia defines these “contests” as NATO’s expansion and Arctic exercises.⁴⁵ To “catch the allies’ attention,” a flight of Russian bombers made a pass during a 2010 Canadian Arctic exercise.⁴⁶

Canada and Denmark overlooked their disputed sovereignty over Hans Island for a combined exercise. Greenland and the associated energy reserves represent Denmark’s principle interests in the Arctic. Similarly, both Russia and Denmark claimed the Lomonosov Ridge, but looked past that when Prime Minister Putin and President Medvedev traveled to Denmark to pursue joint naval exercises and facilitate agreements between state-run energy companies.⁴⁷

Prior to negotiating with the Russians, and in response to Russia’s Arctic resurgence, Denmark modernized its fleet with a new class of frigate, ice-capable Ocean Patrol Vessels, and an order for F-35s.⁴⁸ Not

⁴⁴ Huebert, *The Newly Emerging Arctic Security Environment*, 15.

⁴⁵ “Russia Prepares For Future Combat In The Arctic,” *RIA Novosti*, 24 June 2008, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20080624/111915879.html> [16 September 2010]

⁴⁶ Murray Brewster, “Russia’s Arctic Policy No Cause For Alarm, Mackay Told,” *The Globe and Mail*, 25 August 2010, 2. <http://www.cdfai.org/>

⁴⁷ “Russia, Denmark: Warming Relations and Moscow’s Intentions,” *Stratfor*, 13 August 2010, http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/20100813_russia_denmark_warming_relations_and_moscows_intentions; Denisova Olga, “Russia-Denmark Cooperation: Turning a New Page,” *The Voice of Russia*, 27 April 2011. <http://english.ruvr.ru/2011/04/27/49542183.html>

⁴⁸ List of ships by class, build date, and capability on the official website for the Admiral Danish Fleet, <http://forsvaret.dk/SOK/eng/About/Ships/Pages/default.aspx>; and the official F-35 website lists Denmark as a partner, although Denmark’s government is not expected to make a final decision on procurement until 2014. <https://f35.com/the-f-35/global-participation/>

having an Arctic-capable icebreaker, the Danish conducted their expedition to the Lomonosov Ridge aboard a Swedish vessel.⁴⁹ Beyond Greenland, Denmark's geographical position influences Russian naval activity from St. Petersburg as well as non-European LNG shipments to Poland, reducing dependence on Russian energy.⁵⁰ Often considered an outsider in Europe, Denmark was a staunch US ally and NATO supporter, turned Russian business partner.

The Norwegians also established bilateral business agreements between their state-run energy company and those of Russia. Norway shares common borders and interests in the Arctic with Russia. The Norwegian Arctic policy currently focuses on enhancing common interests with their big neighbor while trying to minimize their differences. Norwegian energy giant Statoil has over forty years of experience drilling in the Arctic where it is the largest earner.⁵¹ The Russian energy giants Rosneft and Gazprom seek Statoil's Arctic expertise through a partnership.⁵² "Since 2002, the Norwegian and Russian governments have signed a series of declarations outlining Norway's role as Russia's strategic partner in Arctic hydrocarbon development," while Norway hosted NATO Arctic exercises and modernized their military.⁵³ The Norwegian Ministry of Defense considers the potential for conflict with Russia very low, but admits they cannot deny tensions.⁵⁴ Currently, Norway's primary Arctic concerns are

⁴⁹ Shamil Yenikeeff and Timothy Krysiak, "The Battle for the Next Energy Frontier: The Russian Polar Expedition and the Future of Arctic Hydrocarbons," *Oxford Energy Comment*, (August 2007) 6
http://www.oxfordenergy.org/pdfs/comment_0807-3.pdf

⁵⁰ "Russia, Denmark: Warming Relations and Moscow's Intentions," *Stratfor*, 13 August 2010,
http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/20100813_russia_denmark_warming_relations_and_moscows_intentions
[14 September 2010]

⁵¹ Yenikeeff and Krysiak, "The Battle for the Next Energy Frontier," 6; Statoil, "2009 Annual Report," Washington, DC: The United States Securities and Exchange Commission, 2009.
http://www.statoil.com/AnnualReport2009/en/Download%20Center%20Files/01%20Key%20Downloads/11%20Annual%20report%20on%20Form%2020F/Annual_Report_2009_20-F.pdf

⁵² Yenikeeff and Krysiak, "The Battle for the Next Energy Frontier," 6.

⁵³ Yenikeeff and Krysiak, "The Battle for the Next Energy Frontier," 7.

⁵⁴ Huebert, *The Newly Emerging Arctic Security Environment*, 13.

fisheries, natural disasters, oil spills, sabotage, and the potential for a cruise ship accident; concerns shared by Russia.⁵⁵

Unlike Russia, the United States did not stop its activities or change Arctic policy after the Cold War. Although seen as the “reluctant Arctic power” the United States is poised to counter potential Russian aggression in the region; however, it has a shortage of icebreakers, all of which reside in the Coast Guard.⁵⁶ The United States has only one Arctic capable icebreaker, the *HEALY*, and no replacement in the works. US Arctic policy supports freedom of transit, protection of the environment and balancing of Russia. Militarily, the United States hosts multinational exercises in Alaska that promote NATO cooperation and present a credible response to any Russian show of force. Lacking surface warfare capability in the Arctic, the US Navy dispatched the latest submarine *USS TEXAS* to the North Pole in 2009 demonstrating all classes of US submarines as ice capable in the same year Russian boomer submarines resumed patrols.⁵⁷

Russia’s historical precedence of a strong military and expanding border did not preclude diplomacy. In 2010, while military strength and assertiveness expanded in the Arctic, participation in the Arctic Council and the UN produced peaceful resolutions to two Russian border disputes with Norway and Canada.⁵⁸ Peacefully resolving Arctic disputes benefit all players in this increasingly interdependent and fragile ecosystem, but power still underwrites diplomacy.

⁵⁵ Katarzyna Zysk, “Russia’s Arctic Strategy: Ambitions and Constraints,” NWC lecture Fall 2010

⁵⁶ Rob Huebert, “The United States Arctic Policy: The Reluctant Arctic Power,” *SPP Briefing Papers Focus on the United States* 2, no. 2 (May 2009): 1.

<http://policyschool.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/research/sppbriefing-huebertonline.pdf>

⁵⁷ Huebert, *The Newly Emerging Arctic Security Environment*, 20-21.

⁵⁸ “Norway, Russia: Nations Agree on Maritime Delimitation,” *Stratfor*, 27 April 2010, http://www.stratfor.com/sitrep/20100427_norway_russia_nations_agree_maritime_delimitation [16 September 2010]; “Russia, Canada: Agree to Resolve Arctic Dispute,” *Stratfor*, 16 September 2010, http://www.stratfor.com/sitrep/20100916_russia_canada_agree_resolve_arctic_dispute [16 September 2010]

Russia's efforts to find solutions through diplomacy plus recent military exercises and global energy trends suggest a three-part solution to address potential problems in the Arctic. Arctic geopolitical stability depends on expansion of multinational energy ventures and environmental disaster response exercises, balancing Russia's growing Arctic military capabilities, and diversifying European energy providers to reduce tensions and increase the time available for diplomacy to succeed—cooperation, strength, and reduced dependence. Response by the circumpolar governments to Russia's actions in the Arctic highlights the value of potential energy reserves and hints at the potential for massive conflict in the Arctic if unchecked.

The Russian Arctic policy released in 2008 promoted international cooperation, but called for the expansion of Arctic forces in case of conflict. Russia carried out costly polar Arctic explorations to prove the majority of the Arctic seabed sits on the Siberian continental shelf. If proved, this would legitimize the Russian claim to more than “460,000 square miles” of Arctic seabed.⁵⁹ International validation of Russian claims would boost their geopolitical standing and hedge a projected decline in domestic oil production. President Medvedev stated to *OilWeek* that “Arctic resources [are] crucial for Russia's economic future” and therefore central to Russian security.⁶⁰ This statement explained Russia's resumption of long-range bomber and reconnaissance missions in 2007 as well as submarine and surface patrols since. This approach led the other circumpolar states to denounce Russian actions, conduct their own North Pole excursions (except Norway), release Arctic strategies, and modernize their fleets.

The Canadian Defense and Foreign Affairs Institute and the Heritage Foundation labeled the saber rattling as the beginning of a “New

⁵⁹ Yeniekeyeff and Krysiak, “The Battle for the Next Energy Frontier,” 4.

⁶⁰ The Canadian Press, “Medvedev Says Arctic Resources Crucial For Russia's Economic Future,” *OilWeek*, 17 September 2008, <http://www.oilweek.com/news.asp?ID=18679> [16 September 2010]

Cold War” with international energy companies as proxies.⁶¹ This is *not* the case. Instead, Western energy giants are collaborating with Russian companies while NATO military modernizations are taking place within increasingly restrained budgets. Increased Russian spending on extravagant and expensive ice-capable nuclear submarines and nuclear bombers undermines the resources available to repair and modernize infrastructure. As roads, water, sewage, and electricity dilapidate, an increasingly politically aware Russian middle class will soon question these unfounded expenditures.

Conclusion.

The Russian leadership that emerged from the Soviet Union’s collapse learned from their challenging transitions, security-minded Putin included.⁶² He rapidly ascended to the Presidency and garnered praises for his achievements. As Machiavelli advised his Prince to make hard decisions, which were immoral or unethical, but were right for the state, Putin made those difficult decisions for Russia—allegedly procuring great wealth in the process. He reversed some of the liberalizing acts, pushed changes in the fossilized military, and moved Russia closer to its tsarist autocratic tradition through domestic repression and reshaping of the government, while remaining devoted to building a constitutional democracy and gradually introducing liberal capitalism.⁶³

Putin understood Russian and Western culture, history, and geography, how they differed, and exploited cleaves between them to regain international prestige. Concurrently he cooperated bilaterally

⁶¹ Barlow, “The Cold War in the Arctic,” 1; Ariel Cohen, Lajos Szaszdi, and Jim Dolbow, “The New Cold War: Reviving the U.S. Presence in the Arctic” *The Heritage Foundation*, 30 October 2008, <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2008/10/The-New-Cold-War-Reviving-the-US-Presence-in-the-Arctic> [14 September 2010]

⁶² Stuermer, *Putin and the Rise of Russia*, 47.

⁶³ Richard Sakwa, *The Crisis of Russian Democracy: The Dual State, Factionalism, and the Medvedev Succession* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 32-34.

where it made sense, consolidated the energy sector under the state, modified the governing structure, began modernizing the military, stabilized downward demographic trends, and demonstrated Russia's recovered geopolitical power. Stability and recovery came at the price of reduced freedoms. Nonetheless, Putin led Russia's recovery from 1998 onward, garnering him the title of *Time* magazine's "Person of the Year 2007."⁶⁴



⁶⁴ "Person of the Year: Vladimir Putin, Tsar of the New Russia," *Time*, 31 December 2007/7 January 2008. <http://www.time.com/time/specials/2007/personoftheyear/0%2C28757%2C1690753%2C00.html>

Chapter 4

Moves Toward Resurgence II

During his first presidency, Putin reversed several of his predecessor's steps toward free-market capitalism and liberal democracy, but in the end, he relinquished the presidency in accordance with the Constitutional limit of two consecutive terms. To say he stepped down is arguably an overstatement; Dmitry Medvedev became the next president partially on a promise to keep his predecessor as prime minister. Therefore, regardless of Medvedev's liberal views and rhetoric focused on reducing corruption, it proved nearly impossible for Medvedev to alter the nation's course with the old master still present.

This chapter briefly describes Medvedev's role in Russia's gradual transformation. It includes a discussion of the significant military restructuring, which occurred under his leadership, as well as an assessment of Medvedev's leadership out of the economic downturn. Bookended by the 2008 global financial crisis and the 2012 presidential election, this second period toward Russian resurgence explores the continued insidious loss of social freedoms. Collectively, the following sections reveal that Medvedev did what he could to strengthen Russia, but while it worked in some areas, reforms were neither optimal nor kind to civil liberties.

Medvedev – A New Generation.

Long before his presidency, Dmitry Medvedev was a law professor at Putin's alma mater in Saint Petersburg. The two worked together on political campaigns, but the younger Medvedev cut his teeth in the liberal academic environment at the end of the Soviet era under Boris Yeltsin, not the conservative KGB like his mentor. Medvedev's ascendancy to the presidency was rapid and a product of his trustworthiness, marketability as both younger and an outsider, not a *siloviki* from the security services

or the communist administration, and his endearing loyalty to Putin's plans.¹

Adding to Medvedev's electability was his time at the head of Gazprom, where he allegedly reduced corruption and drastically improved profits: two things all of Russia needed. As president, Medvedev offered a roadmap for both Russia's modernization and its competitiveness in an article titled "Go Russia!" on the official website of the President of Russia in 2009. He bracketed it with speeches reinforcing its arguments. Medvedev began by capturing Russia's problems: "an inefficient economy, semi-Soviet social sphere, fragile democracy, negative demographic trends, and unstable Caucasus," and then provided his solutions to each.² His five-part economic strategy follows:

First, we will become a leading country measured by the efficiency of production, transportation and use of energy. We will develop new fuels for use on domestic and international markets. Secondly, we need to maintain and raise our nuclear technology to a qualitatively new level. Third, Russia's experts will improve information technology and strongly influence the development of global public data networks, using supercomputers and other necessary equipment. Fourth, we will develop our own ground and space infrastructure for transferring all types of information; our satellites will thus be able to observe the whole world, help our citizens and people of all countries to communicate, travel, engage in research, agricultural and industrial production. Fifth, Russia will take a leading position in the production of certain types of medical equipment, sophisticated diagnostic tools, medicines for the treatment of viral, cardiovascular, and neurological diseases and cancer.³

Medvedev's modern, humanistic beliefs shined through as he noted the modernization programs under both Peter the Great and the

¹ The term *siloviki* appears frequently in discussions of Russian government and refers to those with a strong connection to the security services, usually the KGB, FSB, or GRU.

² Dmitry Medvedev, "Go Russia!" Official article on the website for the *President of Russia*, 10 September 2009. (accessed 26 March 2012) <http://eng.news.kremlin.ru/news/298>

³ Medvedev, "Go Russia!"

Bolsheviks were brutal and costly in both lives and resources, ways he would not tolerate. He called for Russia to develop “in a democratic way” that would take time, self-actualization, and patience; a transition guided persuasively, not coercively as in the past.⁴ Far from a Hobbesian or Machiavellian, Medvedev is perhaps a post-industrial technological determinist of economic growth with sights set on a modern constitutional democracy, romanticized by his in-depth knowledge of antiquity.⁵

Medvedev’s assessment and reforms closely aligned with the writings of Princeton professor Robert Gilpin, as detailed in his 2001 book *Global Political Economy*.⁶ Specifically, Medvedev’s actions as the head of Gazprom indicate a preference of employing oligopolistic competition to counter Europe’s near monopsony on Russia’s energy market. Carrying his propensity for soft power to the presidency, his successful national reforms occurred primarily through economic levers.

Medvedev’s progressive rhetoric and Western vision clearly “solved none of the systemic problems,” but that was not his stated intent.⁷ Analyzing Medvedev’s first three years as president, Richard Sakwa focused on the negative and missed Russia’s historical precedence. Historically, rapid reforms produced shocking instability, which led to or enabled violence against the Russian people, furthered corruption, and produced tyrannical governments. Medvedev knew this. Appropriately, he set a distant vision, forced changes when and where he could—while

⁴ Medvedev, “Go Russia!”

⁵ Medvedev, “Go Russia!” Supporting his view of post-industrial informational technological determinism as a means for furthering humanistic is his statement: “Every new invention which improves our quality of life provides us with an additional degree of freedom. It makes our existential conditions more comfortable and social relations more equitable. The more intelligent, smarter and efficient our economy is, the higher the level of our citizens’ welfare, and our political system and society as a whole will also be freer, fairer and more humane”.

⁶ Robert with the assistance of Jean M. Gilpin, *Global Political Economy: Understanding the International Economic Order* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

⁷ Richard Sakwa, *The Crisis of Russian Democracy: The Dual State, Factionalism, and the Medvedev Succession* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011), viii.

maintaining stability—and moderated those who called for a rapid return to Yeltsin's liberalism.

Sakwa identified a significant hurdle for contemporary Russia as the competition to define her future by two opposing groups. Unlike Western Jeffersonian Republicanism, with its focus on political parties, Russian groups presented either a civic-humanism approach or an authoritarianism model.⁸ Medvedev rhetorically stood for the former. His predecessor, and the other *siloviki*, leaned toward the latter.

In accordance with his statements, Medvedev implemented legislation to increase transparency and reduce corruption, but with limited results. Throughout his presidency, he touted anti-corruption efforts, pushed social and military reforms, guided Russia out of a global depression, conducted a successful war against Georgia, and reset relations with the United States. While Medvedev made substantive progress toward his goals, a long road to recovery remained for Russia.

Prior to Medvedev, President Putin tackled corruption among the wealthy oligarchs, but government corruption was a different story. Medvedev mandated personal financial disclosure and accountability from senior government officials, but usually not from their deputies. Research revealed only one case of enforcement, and that was in the military leadership—an area where the crackdown on corruption resulted in the firing of hundreds of officers below the General Staff level.⁹

Perhaps Medvedev's most drastic reforms appeared in the defense agencies. The close-run war in Georgia shaped domestic and international politics, but also revealed the impact of neglecting the military and not forcing it to adapt to the similar environment of the

⁸ *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/> For in-depth philosophical studies of civic-humanism, authoritarianism, liberal democracy, constitutional democracy, and other such terms used in this paper, see background lectures and papers posted in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

⁹ Irina Filatova, "Medvedev Renews Corruption Battle," *The Moscow Times*, 22 March 2012. <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/business/article/medvedev-renews-corruption-battle/455351.html>

1990s. Medvedev's remedy was a drastic makeover of the armed forces "Реформа вооруженных сил."¹⁰

Recapitalizing The Force.

Given two decades of politically less-than-helpful military actions, an increasingly politically aware population, and a historical trend of military coups, the desire for furthered political control over the military was understandable. At the same time, strategic credibility and deterrence remained job number one for the military, while socioeconomic trends demanded broad structural changes in the Russian military. Significant reform of the massive Russian military bureaucracy was difficult, but the military triumvirate of Medvedev, Putin, and Serdyukov found success. Their plan sought military modernization, staffing within demographic limitations, a refocus on the likely threat, and emphasis on nuclear deterrence for improbable scenarios and political determinism as outlined in Chapter 3.¹¹ Beginning with outlining what it takes to reform a massive military, this section reveals how Medvedev and his team forced change and presents their results—an amazing feat given the bureaucratic inertia of the Russian defense establishment.

Affecting change in bureaucracies begins with a vision and motive driven by an agent with sufficient power to overcome institutional inertia. Dr. Stephen J. Blank captured the Russian military's protectionist posture when he suggested, "an ongoing and repetitive conflict takes place between the Ministry of Defense and the General Staff regardless of precedent or personalities" due to the absence of codified policymaking.¹² Blank, et al., implied institutional inertia stemmed from lack of a

¹⁰ Stephen Blank and Richard Weitz, eds., *The Russian Military Today and Tomorrow: Essays in Memory of Mary Fitzgerald* (Carlisle, PA: SSI, 2010), 7.

¹¹ The war against Georgia produced a win for the Russian military, but a geopolitical loss for Russia. Her international prestige declined with yet another bellicose act as a bully instead of a global leader.

¹² Blank and Weitz, *The Russian Military Today and Tomorrow*, 23.

formalized process for change, while Barry Posen recognized bureaucracies intentionally resist change.

Chapter 2 of this paper captured Posen's theory of military change originating from an insider maverick empowered by powerful external political leadership. Who the specific maverick or groups of mavericks were in Russia remains unclear.¹³ Nonetheless, Medvedev and his Minister of Defense met Posen's prerequisites for reform when they held sufficient power, leveraged insiders, and timed guidance to build on a recent victory. Their direction shifted Russia's principle external conventional enemy from NATO to regional actors and appropriately reconfigured the force structure.

Peter the Great created a modern military on the heels of defeat by copying successful European examples of the time and both dictating modernization from the top as well as leading from the front as a warrior elite. As president, Medvedev lacked the power of the great tsar and was not likely to join any military expedition, much less lead it. Building on Putin's actions and in cooperation with key senior military civilian and uniformed leaders, Medvedev succeeded in restructuring the military from the top down.

Culturally and legally, Russia's post-Soviet civil-military structure enabled military-initiated actions and influenced presidential decisions through control of strategic intelligence by the military.¹⁴ Founded in a pact between Yeltsin and his general staff to shore up military support to the president in return for escaping reforms and gaining increased autonomy, this relationship proved more injurious than beneficial to the

¹³ It appears current Chief of Russia's General Staff, General Nikolai Makarov, is either Putin's inside man, or at least highly loyal to and supportive of the Putin regime. Makarov gained significant power under Putin in 1999, and attained the highest position under Medvedev. His comments often precede statements from the Kremlin with a similar message.

¹⁴ Strategic intelligence refers to intelligence products that reach the president and prime minister with the ability to influence foreign policy.

Kremlin.¹⁵ In an effort to restrain the military following the autonomous seizing of the airport at Pristina, Putin fostered competition, reduced independence by emboldening other security services, and later appointed Minister of Defense Anatoly Serdyukov to reduce military corruption and tighten the reins on the military brass. His efforts, valiant as they were, fell short of reforming the military.

Building on Putin's measures, aided by the "operational victory" against Georgia, and guided by the lessons from that close-run conflict, Medvedev supported Serdyukov in restructuring the military. In addition to reorganization, modernization under the Medvedev-Serdyukov team focused reforms on increasing technology and equipment, making military service more attractive and professional, shaping the collective security and defense organizations toward the expected threat, and emboldening the nuclear force to deter the unlikely. Their crackdown resulted in the removal of large numbers of officers, the insertion of civilians in the military structure, and the emergence of military leaders cooperative with the desired changes. Ultimately, demographics and the cost of modernization shaped Russian military reforms under Medvedev as much as a maverick insider might have.¹⁶

Competition for able bodies under Putin and Medvedev's balancing of security forces likely exacerbated the reduction in size of the military, while it increased the number of "special" police and security units. This transition of power from externally focused to internally focused

¹⁵ Timothy L. Thomas, *Recasting the Red Star: Russia Forges Tradition and Technology Through Toughness*, Fort Leavenworth, KS: Foreign Military Studies Office, 2011, 11. Timothy L. Thomas postulated the lack, or failure, of Russian military reforms from 1993 to 2004 resulted from Soviet-era officers scuttling reforms in an effort to protect their own self-interests. This paper is not countering his argument, but acknowledging *all* bureaucratic institutions suffer from this same resistance to change and therefore, reform did not occur in the eleven years Thomas captured due to a lack of external motive (sufficient pressure in one form or another) to change, *not* as a result of the General Staff's efforts. Medvedev and Georgia changed the environment, while Anatoliy Serdyukov directed modernization.

¹⁶ Blank and Weitz, *The Russian Military Today and Tomorrow*. Discussion suggests it may take until at least 2020 to achieve some of the reforms in an environment where the military can barely afford to modernize existing systems.

presented (external audiences) an informal acknowledgment of Russia's most likely threat as arising from domestic instability, contrasting public statements of a nuclear threat from the US or NATO. Ultimately, civ-mil relations married military reforms to Putin's consolidation of power and reduced democratization as both domestic intelligence and security organizations gained power.¹⁷ Additionally, drastically reducing the size of the General Staff carried the second-order effect of reducing the influence of the GRU (military intelligence).

Influence often equates to access to national resources such as people and money. In addition to the decreases in military manning and influence, the economic downturn and resulting lower state revenues also influenced the ultimate shape of the military. Modernization required transition to expensive networked technologies, but that investment was required in any case to regain relevancy. Stated reform objectives of "closing the technology gap with Western militaries; empowering lower-level officers to exercise authority; curtailing wasteful corruption; [and] making a military career more attractive" reveal the significant level of influence tighter budgets and a shrinking population had on shaping reforms.¹⁸

Budgetary realignments and top political support addressed technology advancements through procurement or requirements levied, while personnel shortcomings also garnered attention. Conforming results with fiscal and demographic environments, several military officer schools merged and a noncommissioned officer (NCO) training center opened to professionalize the smaller force. Meanwhile, reorganization streamlined the command and control structure through an infusion of civilians, which reduced costs, improved responsiveness, and quality,

¹⁷ Zoltan Barany, *Democratic Breakdown and the Decline of the Russian Military* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 177, quoted in Stephen J. Blank and editor, *Civil-Military Relations in Medvedev's Russia* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2010), 1.

¹⁸ Blank and Weitz, *The Russian Military Today and Tomorrow*, 7.

increased political control and continuity, and shaped the infrastructure for further reductions and restructuring.

Russian military forces began designing, developing, procuring, and employing modern command and control communications, their eyes fixed on an eventually professional net-centric force. Previously, only Russian officers had access to radios. Reductions in the ratio of officers as well as the implementation of a professional NCO corps demanded technical change. Actions in Georgia by unconnected units proved limiting and nearly disastrous. Airborne force expert Rod Thornton estimated that the incorporation of a net-centric architecture will take another five years, but this was a critical step in truly modernizing the Russian military force.¹⁹ A net-centric military would build on Russia's robust cyber capabilities. Advanced weapons systems, from missile to aircraft, were also in the works. This aspect of military modernization furthered Russian research and development, while advancing the stated social agenda of establishing a globally competitive high-technology industry.

For the military, technology was only one piece of the performance problem; another was personnel. As the ratio of officers shifts in favor of the enlisted, and increasingly toward the nascent NCO corps, individual empowerment must also drive to lower ranks. Technological determinists might argue an increase in communications will increase accountability, which would reduce senior leaders' concerns about empowering lower ranks. Unfortunately, micromanaging does not equate to empowerment, and corruption remains sufficiently high to erode trust.

Corruption is a cultural problem for Russia and one that permeates their society. Russia is not likely to eliminate corruption in the military, but perhaps it may reduce it to a manageable level. Within

¹⁹ Rod Thornton, *Organizational Change in the Russian Airborne Forces: the Lessons of the Georgian Conflict* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2011), 37.

the military, professionalizing the force offers a framework in which to reduce corruption and improve performance. Contributing to the hurdles, which frustrate attempts to professionalize their force, are the low quality of life in the military as well as the often-harsh treatment of recruits. Both factors contribute to corruption and crime, which discourage the dwindling pool of potential recruits from joining and drive large numbers of those serving to leave early.²⁰

Reinforcing calls for military restructuring was Russia's negative demographic trends. In late 2011, Chief of Russia's General Staff, General Nikolai Makarov, sounded the alarm when he commented to *RIA Novosti* that Russia has "no one left to draft."²¹ While some might argue the Russian population tapered off its decline at around 142 million, and therefore sufficient conscripts likely exist should a national emergency arise, Makarov identified only 11.7 percent of young males as eligible recruits and 60 percent of those not medically draftable.²² Reaching back nearly a decade to 2003, officials complained that less than "10 percent of" those eligible were recruitable, but author Aleksandr Golts explained their numbers included "all Russian males between 18 and 27 years of age"; Makarov's numbers likely do the same.²³ In reality, most of the young Russian population is draftable should the need arise to justify overriding the myriad of prohibitions such as broad (and sometimes falsified) medical conditions, homosexuality, drug addiction, and family demands. Kremlin leadership has acknowledged poor living standards for its military as well as the associated low level of retention for some time. From the still large population and openness about abuses and low living standards in the military, General Makarov's

²⁰ Aleksandr Golts, "The Social and Political Condition of the Russian Military," in Steven E. Miller and Dmitri Trenin, eds., *The Russian Military: Power and Policy* (London, England: MIT Press, 2004), 74-82.

²¹ "Russian Military Has 'No One Left to Draft,'" *RIA Novosti*, 17 November 2011.

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20111117/168776056.html

²² "Russian Military Has 'No One Left to Draft,'"

²³ Golts, "The Social and Political Condition of the Russian Military," 75.

comments appear as political spin to justify military restructuring, rather than an honest assessment.

Russia certainly has had its share of drug, alcohol, and medical problems, but it also apparently has sufficient qualified young males to fill the ranks of its expanding security services; after eight years of Putin expanding the security services, Medvedev established a special security force to manage political rallies without mention of a shortage of qualified personnel. The aggregate of the various security and defense organizations maintain funding and personnel and are gaining the skills to counter insurgencies in the region and within their borders. Given a robust domestic intelligence capability, these security forces are also capable of dispatching civic unrest in Russia proper—a concern with historical precedence. After the Soviet collapse, internal and regional security and stabilization operations became the most common military requirements; rebellion remains the most likely source of future conflict, but nuclear war still holds the most catastrophic potential.

Contrasting Russia's strategic forces with a declining population of conscripts and outdated conventional equipment presented major regional competitors with a weak and likely hollow conventional force, but a robust nuclear threat. If opposed by a Chinese army, or to a lesser extent an Indian, European, Turkish, or NATO force, Russia's limited conventional force would likely employ nuclear weapons preemptively as "an all-purpose instrument" for lack of a sufficient conventional capacity.²⁴ As unlikely as these potential conflicts appear, it is the role of the military to prepare in such a way as to deter them, and to fight and win should deterrence fail. For the near future, Russia's primary defense options against massive external attack call for the employment of nuclear weapons.

²⁴ Blank and Weitz, *The Russian Military Today and Tomorrow*, 11.

Russia is the United States' only true strategic nuclear peer; a fact supported by the disproportionate numbers and yields of US and Russian nuclear forces compared to those of other nuclear states.²⁵ Russia inherited its nuclear force from the much larger Soviet strategic forces over two decades ago and is in the process of modernizing many of these aging weapon systems. The robust and capable Russian nuclear threat made it into SACEUR's Congressional testimony of what actions and capabilities have him worried.

Admiral James Stavridis, the current SACEUR, testified that Russian development of four new classes of submarines and associated new submarine-launched nuclear weapons presents a significant maritime threat. Specifically, he stated "a highly capable Russian submarine fleet whose pace, scope, and sophistication have risen dramatically in recent years" is increasingly available for export and proliferation.²⁶ Strategically, Stavridis' testimony highlighted continued Russian advancements in "submarine-launched ballistic missiles" and "suspension of implementation of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty" as concerning to NATO.²⁷

Russia sank vast resources into new submarines and ballistic missiles in the last decade. After the loss of the *Kursk* and Russia's withdrawal from START II, it stretched logic for Russia to shift its nuclear deterrence focus away from already established, and paid for, land-based systems.²⁸ Traditionally, seasonally-restricted ports have limited Russian participation in global maritime activities, either for trade or war. Additionally, tight budgets and contemporary history illustrate a

²⁵ The *Arms Control Association* website offers approximate weapons numbers by country for comparison. <http://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Nuclearweaponswhohaswhat>

²⁶ United States European Command, "Testimony of Admiral James G. Stavridis, United States Navy Commander, United States European Command Before The 112th Congress, 2011," 23-24.

²⁷ United States European Command, "Testimony of Admiral James G. Stavridis, United States Navy Commander, United States European Command Before The 112th Congress, 2011," 39

²⁸ Blank and Weitz, *The Russian Military Today and Tomorrow*, 9.

need for a smaller, cheaper, lighter rapid reaction land force versed in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency, not an expanded navy.

Investment in new nuclear-armed submarines speaks to a fear of American missile defenses, a warming Arctic, and the expanding nuclear capabilities to their east. Missile defense in Europe would undermine the credibility of a Russian missile attack in the region, reducing its deterrent value, and ultimately reducing their prestige and the global balance of power. Increased Arctic activities will bring foreign navies and a new threat to the sparse Russian north. One of the nuclear-armed navies focused on the Arctic is China, a growing nuclear power Russia must credibly deter. Absent its credible nuclear threat, Russia would lose significant global influence.²⁹

While directing attention and funding to their nuclear force, the Russian military restructured to align with national requirements and capabilities as well as initiated long overdue reforms. Bureaucracies resist change by design, but the triumvirate of Medvedev, Putin, and Serdyukov leveraged increased executive power, declining demographics, the military “victory” against Georgia in 2008, and the global economic crisis later that year to force changes across the military from the top down. As with other aspects of the Russian society, large hurdles remain for the military, but military reforms re-vectored institutional inertia toward addressing the security threats of the current geopolitical environment.

Reforming The State.

If the close-run nature of the war in Georgia reinforced the need for military reforms to Medvedev, the global economic collapse later that year was an explicit awakening to Russian elites about the level of Russian economic integration and dependence on the global commodities market.

²⁹ For a discussion on the political relationship between nuclear weapons and global influence see Chapter 3 section 3.3 *Determinism* in this document.

Putin previously achieved social and market stability, but this economic awakening risked much of his progress and increased the urgency of calls to diversify and modernize Russia's economy, reduce corruption, and reinvest in infrastructure. Medvedev eventually led Russia out of the global financial crisis and produced a wealthier and more powerful state, even expanding non-oil industries, but he accomplished this through reduced domestic liberties.

Russian leaders had multiple opportunities to learn the limits of a commodities-based economy from the drop in oil prices in the 1980s and 1990s, but the 2008 global economic collapse exceeded government preparedness and demonstrated that external economic trends directly affected Russia economically, politically, and militarily. This was not the first time. The global economy penetrated Soviet attempts at economic isolation, frustrated Yeltsin's attempts to integrate, and overwhelmed Putin's vast hidden economic stabilizers and consolidation of critical industries. Neither isolation nor luck saved the Russian economy, but Putin's foreign reserves, IMF loans, and Medvedev's economic decisions helped one of the countries hit hardest by the recession, Russia, to recover faster than many of those in the West.

Prior to securing IMF loans, Russia demonstrated sustained economic growth on its own, both energy related and otherwise. Unquestionably, the price of commodities rose almost continuously during Putin's first two presidential terms, but other market sectors also grew. Nonetheless, after a decade of Putin calling for market diversity and a transition to the high-technology sectors, commodities continued to dominate the Russian economy at the time of the 2008 economic crisis.

In its 2011 country assessment, the IMF removed data on oil revenues and assessed the remaining economic sectors. What they found was general economic growth in Russia, while specifics told a different and worrisome story. A closer analysis revealed individual

markets fluctuated greatly, the banking sector was hit or miss, inflation rampant, and corruption remained a significant barrier to greater stability, growth, and external investment. These factors contributed to the IMF's forecast for economic trouble in the immediate future unless Russia changed its spending habits and stabilized its financial institutions.³⁰

The IMF's assessment was void of comments on Putin's market stabilizers. While calling for market diversification to stagger business cycles and move Russia into a modern balanced economy, Putin built up the national reserves during the fat years of this presidency. The resultant economic stability encouraged some foreign investment, but Putin's rough handling of foreign companies fell short of inviting. With economic incentives vaporizing at the end of 2008, many foreign investors withdrew. Their exit reduced the effectiveness of Kremlin economic stabilizers, while the depth of the recession shortened the duration reserves could offset. Nonetheless, the Russian economy would have been far worse without these efforts.

Building on Putin's efforts, Medvedev continued encouragement of domestic manufacturing while he shaped an external image of Russia as a modern reliable trading partner and energy supplier. Both Putin and Medvedev addressed the need to diversify the Russian economy and domestically produce many of the goods Russians demand, thereby reducing the impact of the "oil curse".³¹ This economic "illness" occurs when energy income strengthens the domestic currency making foreign products more affordable, locally produced goods less competitive and

³⁰ "IMF Executive Board Concludes 2011 Article IV Consultation with the Russian Federation," IMF, 14 September 2011. <http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pn/2011/pn11120.htm>

³¹ Richard M. Auty, *Sustaining Development in Mineral Economies: the Resource Curse* (Thesis, London: Routledge, 1993). In addition to the often-referenced high-technology industry, Kremlin leadership heavily promoted Russia's nascent automotive industry, expanding agribusiness, and booming foreign military sales. The oft-used phrase 'oil curse' is a derivative of Richard M. Auty's "resource curse" as presented in his 1993 thesis.

ultimately driving manufacturing out of the oil producing state, which leads to a welfare state sustained by the variable commodities market.³²

Observing major economic models, Robert Gilpin analyzed and compared American market-oriented shareholder capitalism, Japanese developmental state-led capitalism, and German social-market capitalism. Analysis revealed each economic model had a strong historical period, but all included business cycles at best manageable by governments, but never avoidable. His conclusion appeared common sense, but was worth repeating here to reinforce the notion. “An economic system strongly reflects the values of the society in which it is embedded and must be judged, at least to some extent, in terms of those values.”³³ One might argue a social system’s probability of success relates to its compatibility with the values and norms of that society.

Cultures respond uniquely to change, requiring an understanding of what pressures or influences illicit the desired response from your target audience. Russia has a lineage of tyrannical rule with associated high levels of crime, corruption, and an unjust legal system. Contrarily, the Soviet command economy and the stable past decade of constant growth in the commodities markets undermined calls for social reforms until crisis struck and reduced government resources.

Over a millennium of history, three hundred years of tsars under the Romanov dynasty, and seventy years of Bolshevik rule established a culturally Russian social contract between the ruling and the ruled. Many Russian rulers faced challenges in upholding their social contract. Often the tsars gained territory through battle for the express purpose of redistribution as payment. Similarly, social reforms from serf emancipation to judicial improvements found motive in maintaining power through expansion of the social contract. The tsars learned the

³² Bressler, *Russia*, 396-397.

³³ Gilpin, *Global Political Economy*, 176.

costs of war and expanded social guarantees. As noted in Chapter 1, when reforms followed an expensive protracted war, such as the Livonian War, revolution was nearby. Heading the revolts were the empowered outside of the aristocracy, the landholders and social elites.

Paradoxically, as government revenues decreased during the crisis, demand increased from the growing number of destitute. Increased demand and decreased revenues reduced investment in infrastructure, limited diversification of markets, and strained the social contract with a high demand for social services and assistance. Unlike previous breaches of the social contract, Kremlin leadership faced a growing and vocal middle class: a product of both their own success as well as the protectionist measures of the Putin administration.

After the protracted Cold War and the ensuing decade of instability, the empowered *siloviki* fundamentally altered the direction of the country, while restoring a portion of the social contract through stabilization measures. Putin knew these measures alone could not maintain growth, so he called for expanded economic diversity and foreign investment. Economic diversity required improving the academic system, incentivizing non-energy research and careers, and upgrading infrastructure. Attracting foreign investment required these improvements as well as social-political changes to respect and protect private property, a step too far for Putin.

Viewing significant external procurement of private property within Russia as a form of invasion, Putin tightly controlled social-political changes to favor Russians with the negative effect of dissuading foreign investment. Paradoxically, Putin's protectionist policies, as both president and then prime minister, greatly expanded a Russian middle class, who would eventually call for his replacement.

Similar to demands for reform levied by a growing middle class in other states, Russia's economic recovery under "managed" or "vertical democracy" produced a growing middle class who increasingly pressured

the Kremlin for movement toward liberal democracy, greater market freedoms, and reduced corruption. The emergent middle class expressed pleasure with the stability and recovery under Putin, but conveyed frustration with the upward limits on their progression, blatant corruption (such as the politically connected with traffic priorities and expensive German cars), underinvestment in infrastructure, pollution, and the insidious loss of personal and political freedoms. When compiled, it is clear an increased political awareness, improved communications, and movement toward authoritarianism drove many to protest against the prime minister in the run up to his latest presidential bid.

Medvedev and Putin addressed some of the protestors' lesser concerns, while furthering their moves toward tsarist authoritarianism. With a mostly government-controlled or influenced public media, the Kremlin elected to leave social media unrestricted, but monitored. This spawned internet groups, media outlets, and rapid global personal communications through which many Russians took their first steps at political participation. One must recognize the difference between unrestricted social media and unmonitored social media in a culture of distrust. At any moment, security personnel might arrive and remove an individual for questioning as often happened previously in tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union. In an apparent first in Russian history, special police non-violently managed protesters and crowds as though they were aware of their every move. After the events, security forces apprehended protest leaders, but left most participants alone. This savvy move by the police proved their cultural awareness, ability to avoid escalation, and the extent of their monitoring.

Morozov wrote extensively about the Russian tactics of opening the internet, flooding it with distracting entertainment and a dose of

propaganda to reduce dissent to *slactivism*.³⁴ In this way, Russians spent their time more concerned about “reality shows” than political competition. A second-order benefit was the increase in cyber-literacy—logically a prerequisite for establishment of a Russian Silicon Valley. Of concern were the arrests and protracted detainments of political dissidents, assassinations of news reporters critical of the regime, and a lack of truly independent political options.³⁵ A difference exists between a government distracting its populace and one squashing their political participation; a difference highlighted in countries who claim to be a constitutional democracy without political pluralism. With increasing power, Putin’s action against political dissents was one more step toward reinstating the tsarist structure of Alexander II.

Dr. Nikolas Gvosdev identified pro-reformists currently calling for a replacement to Putin as the same business class who supported Putin’s political party *United Russia* “for bringing stability and prosperity to Russia.”³⁶ President Medvedev’s calls for modernization resonated with a population that was increasingly politically aware through expanding “virtual freedoms” and tightening social liberties. Despite statements from Medvedev for reformed education, reduced corruption, transparent government, and improved infrastructure, results were slow or non-

³⁴ Evgeny Morozov, *The Net Delusion: the Dark Side of Internet Freedom* (New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2011), 189-191. Slacktivism captures the millions who “Like” or “Friend” a cause through social media, but go no further in supporting the cause. Morozov used the example of 1.7 million Facebook users “liking” the NGO Save the Children of Africa, while contributing an average of less than one-hundredth of a cent each. In reality, most contributed nothing more than a mouse click—they were slacktivist.

³⁵ Brian Whitmore, “The Winds Of Slow Change,” *Radio Free Europe*, 19 April 2012, http://www.rferl.org/content/the_winds_of_slow_change/24554030.html. Several critics of the Putin administration associated the lack of media coverage to alternate candidates, competition chosen by the Kremlin, and multiple political parties created by Putin as proof that political pluralism in Russia was really a mirage. Recent opposition victories at the sub national level balance these claims and indicate a transition from attempts to affect change at the national level to a grassroots approach.

³⁶ Nikolas Gvosdev’s response to “A ‘Color Revolution’ in Russia” posted on Dr. Tom Nichols blog *The War Room*, 27 December 2011, <http://tomnichols.net/blog/2011/12/24/a-color-revolution-in-russia/>.

existent. Political scientists recognized “[d]ysfunctional government and pervasive corruption make modernization difficult.”³⁷

Nonetheless, “[m]odernization, in one form or another, is a perennial Russian theme.”³⁸ Peter the Great’s selective Europeanization of Russia, Tsar Alexander II’s emancipation of the serfs, Stalin’s “Socialism in One Country,” Gorbachev’s Perestroika, and Yeltsin’s liberalization established “more than three hundred years of the state initiating monumental national overhauls and exhorting society into action.”³⁹ Putin’s “vertical democracy”, continued under Medvedev, sustained this tradition and called for protecting the energy market while broadening Russia’s economy through development of an automotive industry, a financial hub (think Wall Street), a high-tech industry, and repairing infrastructure. Arguably, Putin’s gradual approach constituted cosmetic changes to the economy more “than a transformation,” while Russian defense organizations changed more significantly.⁴⁰

Keeping with Russian tradition, Putin and Medvedev recognized their state lagged the West in many areas. Remedying the economic sector required investing in academic systems, incentivizing non-energy careers and research, upgrading infrastructure, respecting private property, and tackling corruption. Contrary to Yeltsin’s rapid implementation, Medvedev and Putin made minor adjustments where they could, which produced command-directed results such as the reestablishment of an automobile industry, and expanded information-technology investments. Ultimately, the crackdown on liberties and the sustained levels of corruption were not optimal, but good for a resurgent

³⁷ Joseph S. Nye, *The Future of Power* (New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2011), 171.

³⁸ Fiona Hill, “Dinner with Putin: Musings on the Politics of Modernization in Russia,” The Brookings Institute, October 2010. http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2010/10_russia_putin_hill.aspx

³⁹ Hill, “Dinner with Putin.”

⁴⁰ Hill, “Dinner with Putin.”

Russia by producing a wealthy, stable state whose policies aligned with their culture.

Conclusion – Economy & Weapons.

Military reform and selective social modernization are Russian traditions with roots exemplified by the acts of Peter the Great and by Russian leaders since. In his first presidency, Putin expressed his frustration with the military and called for changes. Little occurred until the military triumvirate of Medvedev, Putin, and Serdyukov externally forced sweeping military changes under President Medvedev. With a forecast completion date around 2020, these reforms have already slashed the number of officers, took steps to return the tsarist (and Western) professional NCO corps, demonstrated a hard stance against overt corruption, and reshaped military districts and procurements heavily toward countering the US technology-dependent force. Building a digital force including expanded nanotechnologies, space assets, unmanned systems, and an advanced nuclear force furthered Medvedev and Putin's economic objective of diversifying Russia's economy away from the dynamic commodities market. Russia's inclusion in the 2008 global economic collapse might lead Medvedev to agree, "...national security is no longer perceived as simply a military concern but as an economic and cultural program."⁴¹

Planning to avoid the "oil curse", Russia's leaders recognized economic growth could not occur in isolation from the global community. Directing Russia's recovery from the 2008 global economic crisis, Medvedev benefited from Putin's work, including the foreign reserves and economic stabilizers he developed. Much work remains in Russia; especially fixing its crumbled infrastructure, cleaning up pollution, expanding liberties, protecting private property, further reducing

⁴¹ George J Demko, *Reordering the World: Geopolitical Perspectives On the Twenty-First Century*, 2nd ed., ed. George J. Demko and William B. Wood (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), 33.

corruption, and countering a myriad of social problems. Nonetheless, the emerging Russia is economically stronger and more competitive.

In its 2009 study on *Russian Foreign Policy*, RAND authors observed, “The Russia that has reemerged as a foreign policy challenge for the United States today is significantly different from the Russia of the recent past—it is wealthier, more stable, increasingly less democratic, and more assertive globally.”⁴² Russia’s strengths increased significantly since. Continuity of governance by a strong and focused regime contributed to increased Russian strength.

Stephen J. Blank concluded the undemocratic structure of contemporary Russian politics caused both the security services and the presidential regime to rely on “the incessant invocation of foreign threats,” causing Russia to remain a geopolitical and military risk to the US.⁴³ This enduring Russian insecurity, abetted by protest from Russia’s fledgling middle class, a rising China, and US missile defense advancements, continued to permeate government, security, social, and economic reforms under President Medvedev.

Most recently, the government showed unusual restraint when containing recent protests. While it is difficult to know what happened to the protesters once they left the street, the fact that state-controlled media covered these anti-Putin rallies was noteworthy. Despite calls for a contender, Russians elected Putin to a third presidential term.

⁴² Olga Oliker et al., *Russian Foreign Policy: Sources and Implications* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Publishing, 2009), xi.

⁴³ Stephen J. Blank and editor, *Civil-Military Relations in Medvedev's Russia* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2010), 57.

Chapter 5

Expectations & Recommendations

Following a decade and a half of uncertainty and decline under Gorbachev and Yeltsin, Russia began its recovery. After Yeltsin resigned, Putin took the helm as energy markets rebounded from their mid-1980s and late-1990s slumps—a significant enabler of its recovery. Putin had several directions to take the state: back toward communism, autarky, or the chaos during Yeltsin, or create something new. Two distinct new options, developed below, were arguable hybrids of the late tsarist era and modern democracy. Resurgence, the first option, is more autocratic and bellicose, while the second, reemergence, is more democratic and internationally responsible.

In his first twelve years, Putin consolidated power in a slow move toward autocracy. Looking into the near future, I propose two possible paths down which Putin could choose to lead Russia in his next presidency.¹ First, Putin could continue on a path toward resurgence built on hard power in an anocracy closely representing a tsarist state with a democratic facade.² Alternatively, Russia could reemerge on the global stage as a fundamentally different state; one balancing hard and soft power, more stable, responsible, and accountable to its people, but democratic in a way unique to Russian culture. After identifying the more likely future, I offer some strategic recommendations for the United States for dealing with a future Russian state.

Although unlikely, a starkly different third option also faces Russia: the possibility of failure. Historic precedence exists in Russia for revolution and periods of government breakdown. While improbable, this

¹ Clearly, these are not the only options, but two informed by research for this paper.

² Jennifer Gandhi and James Vreeland, *Political Institutions and Civil War: Unpacking Anocracy*, 30 August 2004. http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/jrv24/Gandhi_and_Vreeland.pdf

possibility is included in the discussion below only as a planning factor for the United States.

This chapter assumes current sociopolitical, demographic, and modernization trends continue in Russia, the commodities market strengthens, US policy toward Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States remains constant, and no major regional or global wars occur during Putin's current presidency.

The path heretofore chosen by Putin produced stability and growth while consolidating presidential power and putting into question the true extent of civil liberties. Now that the Russian economy has recovered, the logical next step includes adding more military and security capacity to the Kremlin's aggressive rhetoric, both regionally and domestically. Translating hard-power capacity into bullying of international corporations and Russia's neighbors or a revoking of liberties domestically may generate some desired results over the near term, but could also produce less desirable consequences, including political blowback or rebellion.

As Putin progressed through his senior government career, from KGB chief through president, he successfully employed the military to further Russian objectives. Broadly categorized, Russia's military conducted multiple expeditions in the Caucasuses, peacekeeping missions in the Balkans, renewed Baltic and Arctic nuclear patrols, suspended compliance with the CFE Treaty, and conducted military assistance and sales to an extensive list of countries often aligned against the United States. The expense of these military activities, both in resources and political power, led the Swedish Institute of International Affairs author Ingmar Oldberg to remark, "External security is placed before economic development, which is largely seen as a means to the end. ... Further, there is little place in the concept for democracy and human rights in the

Western sense.”³ While each state is responsible for their defense, Russia’s external actions—especially those outside of the Caucasus and in the UN—tend to focus on a resurgent Russia capable of balancing against the United States.

Russia is not alone in its political opposition to the United States or its ambitions for a greater role in world affairs. In addition to the many regional organizations incorporating Russia, Medvedev promoted organization of the Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) group and increasingly RIC as a trilateral cooperative in Asia.⁴ Furthermore, after the 2008 Russian-Georgian war and follow-on US support to Georgia, Russia increased military ties to Venezuela, Cuba, Libya, and Syria.⁵ At the same time, Medvedev used the global economic crisis as an opportunity to warm diplomatic relations with the United States.⁶

The US-Russian reset contributed to the continued use of military means by Russia to bully their neighbors. Svante E. Cornell illustrated the lack of US objection to Russian military ventures after the summer of 2009.⁷ He argued the US-Russian reset following the global economic collapse included the United States no longer contesting advanced military sales to and from Russia, a reduction in the sale of US weapons

³ Ingmar Oldberg, “Russia’s Great Power Strategy under Putin and Medvedev,” Swedish Institute of International Affairs, *Occasional Paper*, no. 1, 2010, 3. <http://www.ui.se/upl/files/44020.pdf>

⁴ For analysis of the many regional organizations Russia belonged to as of 2010 see: Oldberg, “Russia’s Great Power Strategy under Putin and Medvedev.” To follow the progress of RIC or other Russian-Indian relations from the Russian perspective (as published by Rossiyskaya Gazeta) see: Nivedita Das Kundu, “RIC: trilateral set to scale new heights,” *Russia & India Report* (April 24, 2012), http://indrus.in/articles/2012/04/24/ric_trilateral_set_to_scale_new_heights_15568.html; and a list of articles on the “4th BRICS Leaders Summit.” *Russia & India Report*. http://indrus.in/4th_brics_leaders_summit

⁵ Oldberg, “Russia’s Great Power Strategy under Putin and Medvedev,” 14.

⁶ Vladimir Solovyov, “Medvedev’s Foreign Policy Paid Off,” *Russia & India Report* (April 16, 2012), http://indrus.in/articles/2012/04/16/medvedevs_foreign_policy_paid_off_15485.html

⁷ Svante E. Cornell, “No Reset in the Post-Soviet Space,” *The Journal of International Security Affairs*, no. 20 (Spring/Summer 2011), <http://www.securityaffairs.org/issues/2011/20/cornell.php#footnotes>

to Russia's neighbors, and looking the other way as Russia enhanced its destabilization efforts in Moldova and Kyrgyzstan.⁸

Resurgence.

Although Cornell interpreted the *reset* as a weakening by the US, it has three other possible objectives. The post-2009 US policy toward Russia may be aimed at reducing Russian military sales to Syria and Iran, thereby contributing to Middle East security—a US national objective—by reducing US and Israeli military sales to Russia's neighbors. Alternatively, as Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger warmed relations with China to facilitate a US exit from Vietnam, so the Obama administration may have warmed relations with Medvedev to set the conditions for closure in Afghanistan. Finally, there is the possibility the new US policy sought to provide Russia sufficient rope to allow them to change their course or generate whiplash as neighbors turned elsewhere for support.

Considering Putin's negative rhetoric about NATO and the US as threats to Russia, one can assume any reduction in overt US military actions on Russia's borders would discredit and erode Russian excuses for maintaining military bases in neighboring countries. In fact, energy and military bullying by Russia cooled relations with Belarus, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan. "Moscow's aggressive tactics have largely failed to bear fruit—but have contributed to deepening the instability of the entire post-Soviet sphere, and to complicating efforts at conflict resolution and development in that region."⁹ Russia's military "support" for ethnic Russian communities in selective countries "backfired by pushing the [targeted] governments to

⁸ Svante E. Cornell, "No Reset in the Post-Soviet Space," *The Journal of International Security Affairs* Spring/Summer 2011, Number 20. <http://www.securityaffairs.org/issues/2011/20/cornell.php#footnotes>

⁹ Cornell, "No Reset in the Post-Soviet Space."

seek support in the West.”¹⁰ Russia’s ability to woo Ukraine or push it to NATO serves as a litmus test for the success and therefore the sustainability of its bullying tactics. Putin’s strong-arm regional policies are an external representation of his power consolidation and crackdown on liberties at home.

Russian regional influence and empowerment stemmed from its domestic advantages: its historically large population, vast and rich geography, and strong military. Reduced US assertiveness in the region created space for Russia to expand its bullying of its neighbors. As mentioned in previous chapters, many of the Soviet Union’s easily accessible resources fell outside of Russian borders, while the post-Soviet Russian military suffered from neglect and its population declined through 2010. To overcome these domestic concerns, Putin led Russia down a path toward authoritarianism.

Throughout the chaos of the Yeltsin presidency, surrounding oneself with a tightknit social group enabled political survival and likely success—a carryover from Soviet times. Yeltsin chose the loyal and trustworthy Putin who, once president, began further subjecting other government bodies to the senior executive. Accomplished mostly through a combination of appointing officials to formerly elected positions or as government representatives to major companies and by dividing responsibilities among more organizations to undermine competing authorities, Putin prepared to resume the Presidency in 2012 as essentially an autocrat ruling the Russian government and its far reaching influences.¹¹

Coercion fashions legality in non-republics, but ruling by coercion also generates enmity.¹² Putin achieved balance by initially focusing his coercive power against Russia’s “jackal oligarchs”, consolidating his

¹⁰ Oldberg, “Russia’s Great Power Strategy under Putin and Medvedev,” 12.

¹¹ Oldberg, “Russia’s Great Power Strategy under Putin and Medvedev,” 1.

¹² Nicolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Rufus Goodwin (Boston, MA: Dante University Press, 2003).

power, and demonstrating his control to those at the local level.¹³ His leadership was strong and focused without appearing tyrannical to the majority of Russians. As economic advantages reached more Russians, they appreciated the returning structure, but became aware of the limits on their opportunities. For example, opportunities to establish a small business or earn above-average profit from hard work increased, while an independent and just legal system, transparent government, or many of the civil liberties found on the internet or experienced abroad by the wealthy oligarchs and the middle class remained unavailable in Russia.

All choices have consequences. Chapter 4 identified one of the byproducts of Putin's success—the creation of a middle (consumer) class, which enjoyed expanded liberties, economic opportunities, and the perception of political plurality during the first decade of the twenty-first century. As this globally connected emergent middle class climbs the political power pole—a feat partially enabled by Putin's crackdown on “jackal oligarchs”—it will be difficult for any administration to remove these advantages without risking rebellion or political blowback. The form of government required to balance the hard-power approach of a resurgent Russia with the demands of its politically informed and connected population is an anocracy. Here the term anocracy describes an authoritarian regime that employs semi-democratic institutions within the government to legitimize despotic power and woo a broader support base.¹⁴ In Russia's case, its growing and vocal middle class, whose economic opportunities grew under Putin's move toward autocracy, represent the support base Putin must win over and hold.

Niccolo Machiavelli pointed out that the goddess *Fortuna* challenged rulers in antiquity; similarly Russians at the local level will

¹³ The author used the term “jackal oligarchs” in reference to Russia's very wealthy who obtained much of their power and money by opportunistically taking advantage of the state or its people in the chaos following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

¹⁴ Gandhi and Vreeland, *Political Institutions and Civil War*.

tolerate the Putin regime as long as fortunes continue, especially when translated into tangibles such as improved infrastructure and quality of life. Opposition rallies preceding the 2012 presidential elections demonstrated the latent power brought by prosperity as demonstrators included groups who prospered under Putin, but now wanted greater prospects. Fortunately for Putin, social discontent focused more on calls for expanding opportunities and reducing corruption than on support for his political competitors.

Medvedev appeared responsive to outcries to release protesters from 2011 rallies and his police force appeared highly professional in the videos available internationally. Putin's path toward autocracy appears unsustainable, as repression must reach a severe level to squash hopes of regaining lost benefits; perhaps this is why repressive communist regimes reference a permanent or enduring state of revolution.¹⁵ Continued economic growth, alone, is insufficient to avert revolution, as demonstrated by attempted revolution in economically stable Stuart England, revolution in the land of opportunity that was the American colonies of 1776, a very wealthy France revolting in 1789, and revolt in the Westernizing and economically growing "Russia of the first three Dumas (1906-12)."¹⁶

Ted Robert Gurr used James C. Davies' theory of relative deprivation (which itself drew on Aristotle, de Tocqueville, and Marx) to explain why people rebelled in the preceding examples. His third model, one of progressive deprivation, associated revolutions to a sudden reversal of fortune or opportunity (economic falter, modernization in an inflexible society, or shrinking governmental responsiveness) after a

¹⁵ Stuart R. Schram, "Mao Tse-tung and the Theory of the Permanent Revolution, 1958-69," *The China Quarterly*, No. 46 (Apr. - Jun., 1971), 221-244 (Princeton, NJ: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 221. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/652262>

¹⁶ Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution*, Revised ed. (New York, NY: Vintage, 1965), 30-32.

“prolonged period of objective economic and social development.”¹⁷ This is most likely to occur “in societies undergoing simultaneous ideological and systemic change,” as Russia is today.¹⁸

Unlike the last tsar, who recognized something was afoot only after striking railroad workers delayed his lunch; Putin appears well informed about opposition activities and is an expert at preventing dissension.¹⁹ Rebellion takes time, resources, commitment, and abrogation of the benefits of the status quo: “it is economical to accept authority.”²⁰ Due to the costs, individuals economically independent from the government often initiate protest or rebellion: in Russia, this included clergy, professionals, academics, students, and the unemployed.²¹ Medvedev’s opposition control measures appeared to exploit social media and monitoring technologies as officials respectfully handled rallies and protests. If Russian security forces conduct reprisal attacks against former anti-regime protesters after Putin’s inauguration, when the international media’s focus lies elsewhere, the level of social acceptance will serve as the litmus test for the sustainability of anocracy in Russia. Even before his inauguration, news about retaliatory strikes against anti-Putin commenters is flooding the internet.²²

Tweets by the new US Ambassador, Michael A. McFaul, disclosing his frustration in Russian government sources reading his emails,

¹⁷ James C. Davies, “Toward a Theory of Revolution,” *American Sociological Review*, no. XXVII (February 1962), 6. As quoted in Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), 52.

¹⁸ Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, 53.

¹⁹ Peter Ackerman and Jack Duvall, *A Force More Powerful* (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2000), 41.

²⁰ Mark I. Lichbach, *The Rebel's Dilemma: Economics, Cognition, and Society*, (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 42.

²¹ Lichbach, *The Rebel's Dilemma*, 42, and Ackerman and Duvall, *A Force More Powerful*, Ch. 1.

²² Mansur Mirovalev, “Russian activist detained for anti-Putin prayer,” *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, Associated Press 29 April 2012. <http://www.ajc.com/news/nation-world/russian-activist-detained-for-1428095.html>. The international media has multiple stories of crackdowns against anti-Putin commenters, singers, protesters, and preachers on a weekly basis. In a single search for articles on April 29, 2012, the following article described the incarceration of first; a rock band of three females who slandered Putin in a song, their crime is “hooliganism” and carries a seven-year sentence. Second, was an anti-Putin activist arrested for praying for the deliverance of “Russia from Vladimir Putin”.

monitoring his calls, and using this information to have state media harass him at every turn, communicate the level of control the Russian government has over local, regional, and global audiences. If they do this to powerful Americans, and get away with it, one must assume the same monitoring occurs of decision makers in neighboring countries and within local Russian communities and dissent groups. In *The Rebel's Dilemma*, Mark Irving Lichbach concluded competition "is the norm among dissident" groups; Russian security services successfully penetrating cyber conduits for dissent and exploiting competition between different groups to the point of paralysis will aid in regime stability.²³

The next presidential election (now in six years) will likely hold Putin to account on his ability to improve the prosperities of the average citizen relative to their expectations and their perceptions of their gain relative to that of others. His challenge will entail a new generation of voters, raised cyber literate and globally connected, potentially tying progressive deprivation to a regional or global standard. Should he choose to continue his path toward anocracy, Russia may emerge as a challenger to the United States, but this path would require a heavy hand and immense suppression within Russia. For Ivan the Terrible, once the serfs tasted liberties, his crackdown led to a mass exodus, which Russia could not afford then and certainly cannot afford now. An alternative future, which may attract a larger population and more foreign investment, incorporates several aspects of Russian culture and continues to build a strong state, but does so in a way more in line with the desires of the Russian people and more responsible internationally. This reemergence of a democratic state is the subject of the next section.

²³ Lichbach, *The Rebel's Dilemma*, 19.

Reemergence.

While resurgence is possible, Russia faces uphill battles it is not likely to win in the near future; however, Russia's current wealth and stability afford Putin the opportunity to redirect Russia toward a more sustainable form of government instead. Built on the assumptions at the beginning of this chapter, this section addresses the emergence of a future Russia with a different geographic focus, economically stronger, internationally responsible, politically accountable, and democratic in a way appropriate for and unique to their culture.

While demographic trends challenge Russia's rise, its vast territory and wealth of resources remain a steadfast contributor to Russian success. How Russia reemerges will be a function of its geography as well as the Kremlin's grand strategy and economic success. Writing in the aftermath of the Soviet breakup, Brzezinski tied Russia's ability to rebound to maintaining control over Ukraine and Azerbaijan: a breadbasket and Central Asian cork.²⁴ Certainly, the loss of influence in Belarus (White Russia) and Ukraine to NATO or the EU would limit Russia to being a Central Asian state, but then again, the Arctic is thawing.

While some focus on the Crimea and the Caucasus, Putin may increasingly focus development and commerce toward the Arctic. Increasing transit along Russia's north equates to an increase in opportunities, both good and bad. As route manager, shippers will look to Russia for assurance of safe passage, port and repair facilities, search and rescue capabilities, and potentially for protection. Environmentally, the burden lies disproportionately on Russia to handle accidents or terrorism prior to irreversible ecological damage occurring. These also afford opportunities for expanded international cooperation.

²⁴ Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*, 46.

In addition to warming relations with other seafaring nations through cooperation and trade, a reduced Russian focus on her volatile south will improve regional stability.²⁵ Azerbaijan, once critical to Russian influence in Central Asia began gradually distancing itself from Russia through increased trade with Turkey in recent years.²⁶ Warming Azeri relations with Turkey fan Russian concerns about future hostilities in the Caucasus region. Expanding Turkish influence in the region, in conjunction with a northern-focused Russia, may encourage Black Sea and Caspian states, who are presently concerned about Russia, to shift their concern and security arrangements.

Arctic workers and shippers may originate in South and East Asia, but their presences will likely concern Russia, as opposed to fostering national relationships. An alliance or strategic partnership between Russia and the more populous economic powerhouse that is China is not likely, as it “would only subordinate Russia to China without solving its problems” and risk a land grab by China.²⁷ Expanding Chinese-Central Asian relations accompany a shift in energy sales from the region to the east beyond Russia’s control; the fortification of such arrangements will reduce the availability of non-Russian energy through the Black Sea to Europe and the Middle East (Israel), thereby strengthening Russian energy markets.

As extraction and transportation technologies increase and the number of days of ice-free access along Siberia’s Arctic coast increases, Russia’s eastern expanses will also gain in importance. If properly managed the opening of Arctic shipping will provide Russia countless new opportunities for employment, tourism, new businesses, and an

²⁵ The preceding section discussed expanded regional instability resulting from Russia’s bullying tactics.

²⁶ CIA, “Azerbaijan,” *World Factbook* 23 April 2012 ed. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/aj.html>

²⁷ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Geostrategic Triad: Living with China, Europe, and Russia* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic & Intl Studies, 2001), 64.

elevated role in global commerce—something historically illusive for Russia. Poorly managed, this opportunity may facilitate illicit trade, undermine government control, draw a high level of immigrant workers, permit increased foreign naval presence, tolerate Chinese encroachment, or generate environmental disasters.

Russia recovered great wealth under Putin's leadership. Creating new markets associated with Siberian shipping and expanded commodities extraction will further strengthen its economy, but require a large initial investment. Realization of the Kremlin vision for lucrative high technology, financial, and industrial centers would also diversify and strengthen its economy; then again, it may compete with Arctic development: a timeline driven by Mother Nature. In either case, the result is an economically stronger Russia.

Traditionally, Russia translated economic power into coercive hard power: economic or military. A reemerging internationally responsible Russia will continue to modernize, expand, and adapt its military to defend its vast environment and broad interests, while reducing or abandoning its strong-arm tactics. Russia is more likely to attract regional actors under her security umbrella and emerge stronger by building her power capacity and withholding its use for threats to national survival, than by engaging in more costly optional regional conflicts of coercion.

As the technology-dependent generation enters the workforce, it expects minimal cost for transmitting data and rapid feedback. Responding quickly often requires decentralization or outsourcing. The volume of information that flows across the internet is prohibitive to exclusive government control, thereby drafting some of the state's power to others. However, Nye noted "larger states still have larger resources" which enable them to "control behavior on the Internet through their

traditional physical threats” against intermediaries.²⁸ Russian transition away from cyber bullying of their neighbors and toward the use of cyber technologies for constructive environment shaping will expand Russian attractiveness as an information guarantor, while increasing domestic employment opportunities.

A consequence of Russia’s mostly open internet and focus on cyber-related industries was an increase in transparency of governance. Because of increased transparency, perceived stagnation or relative deprivation across the middle class, and Medvedev’s tolerance, thousands of opposition protesters made a coordinated statement for social and governmental changes in the run up to Russia’s latest presidential election. Andrew C. Kuchins analyzed the demographics of the protestors and found they were not rebels calling for a coup, but were “the emerging Russian middle and even upper-middle class with less experience with the Soviet past, more familiarity with new communications technologies and networking, and a growing confidence about their capacity to define their future.”²⁹ This new group of protesters was invested in and proud of Russia, but unhappy with its current direction. “Russians are simply too wealthy, too well educated, and too European to tolerate this anachronistic political system much longer.”³⁰ They desire increased liberty, justice, and government accountability, but Russia is not likely to jump to a liberal democracy overnight.

Several opinions exist concerning which peoples or states are ready for democracy and what prerequisites are required for democracy to take hold. Throughout the 1990s, Russia experimented with democracy

²⁸ Nye, *The Future of Power*, 118, 128.

²⁹ Andrew C. Kuchins, “Politics Have Returned to Russia: Where Do They Go from Here?” (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies, 16 December 2011), <http://csis.org/publication/politics-have-returned-russia-where-do-they-go-here>

³⁰ Kuchins, “Politics Have Returned to Russia.”

without the institutions in place to enable success. Additionally, the drop in energy prices and actions of “jackal entrepreneurs” devastated Russia’s economy, causing many Russians to “associate democracy not just with chaos and corruption, but with economic uncertainty and the country’s economic collapse. Thus, when Putin began to roll back the democratic advances of the previous decade, he faced little pushback from a population that first and foremost valued economic security.”³¹ Economic stability and growth under Putin lent credence to his “managed democracy”, but now the middle class it produced is awakening to the value of greater democracy and indicating their readiness for the next step.

Democracies come in various forms and Russia currently fits into at least one of them; a search for democracy returned a list of more than forty forms of this polity type.³² The best description of the concept of democracy is representation of the will of the people in the government. In Putin’s “vertical” or “managed democracy”, the populace votes for leaders who, outside of the president, hold decreasing amounts of power; however, the subjects are growing restless and demanding change.

While fostering economic and military growth, an emergent Russia could expand freedom of speech and adjust the judicial process to increase accessibility and responsiveness to the average Russian to address many of the protesters’ complaints.³³ An empowered independent judicial branch would serve as a check on executive authorities, but likely produce little noticeable change at the grassroots. It may even provide an additional conduit for corruption to reach the top

³¹ Steven Pifer, *What Does Russia Want? How Do We Respond?* A speech to the George Bush School of Government and Public Service, Texas A&M, 11 September 2008.
http://www.brookings.edu/speeches/2008/0911_russia_pifer.aspx

³² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_types_of_democracy#Types_of_democracy

³³ Several protesters or opposition figures sat in detainment for extended periods without being charged. The most recent example was the three singers incarcerated for an anti-Putin song, as detailed earlier in this chapter.

of the government. At the other end of power, a more responsive criminal court system focused on upholding the laws of the land and cracking down on organized crime would produce a climate more hospitable to an advanced society. Several tsars attempted to improve and spread justice across the land, but at the time the absence of written laws, official pay and limited accountability undermined success.

Culture plays a significant role in social acceptance of rule. Russia has a long history of traditions and unique cultural norms. A strong, wealthy, and stable reemerging Russia will likely become more democratic in accordance with the demands from the politically aware and socially empowered; to be viable, a more democratic Russia must match its structure to its heritage. This implies a return of elected local officials, a limited independent media (perhaps limited to the internet), and accountability of elected officials, even if those elected hold little actionable power.

Collapse

Changes in governance carry a historically violent or chaotic burden in Russia. Certainly, continuance of a strong regime, even if it transition to a different form, provides social control. Contrarily, Russia has a history of rebellion and disorderly transitions. Unlike fragile Third World regimes, complete collapse of governance in Russia is highly unlikely. Nonetheless, the United States should consider potential geostrategic implications of even a temporary collapse in the rule of law. Strategists could learn from the breakup of the Soviet Union to identify priorities for protection. For example, a plan to secure nuclear weapons and material should rank above protection of Russian territory from potential vulturine states. It is understandably difficult for the US Congress to justify allocating more funds to cleaning up a distant region of the world, especially under tight financial times, but tracking down

and de-militarizing WMD in the former Soviet Union is worth the investment as it strengthens US national security in the end.

Recommendations for the United States.

As the Iron Curtain fell and revealed an unstable, fragmented, and weak Soviet Union, many associated the myriad of challenges facing Russia as sufficient to prevent her from emerging as a significant competitor to the United States. Low energy prices, geographically smaller “pieces” of a former foe, and social turmoil tied to Gorbachev’s and then Yeltsin’s reforms contributed to this view. The resultant Russia was not in a position to contest the United States in any respect other than in its arsenal of strategic nuclear weapons throughout the 1990s.

The United States leveraged economics, institutional leadership, technology, diplomacy, and a dominant military to maintain the current global structure. It relied on broad international cooperative institutions for legitimacy and exclusive power groups such as the UN Security Council, IMF, World Trade Organization (WTO), and the Group of Eight (G8) for critical decisions. Despite its drastically reduced capabilities and international standing, the Russian Federation assumed the Soviet Union’s seat in many of these power groups. As a result, the United States maintained open dialog and expanded cooperative relations with Russia: a tradition worth continuing. This section recommends the United States pursue a positive approach to the emerging Russia, cooperating when and where it makes sense, but remaining cautious with respect to any security arrangements—a point of contention between the two former superpower rivals.

Historically, Russia has been security sensitive for good reasons; shifting the focus of US rhetoric from European missile defense toward positive non-security objectives will provide opportunities to influence, build trust, and learn from each other, while remaining clear of Russian cultural redlines. Distrust should not prevent positive collaboration

when possible, but rather, limit expectations to a temporary ability to influence and shape Russian developments and actions to align with US desires.

It is natural that as Russia reemerges it will expand its military capabilities. This hard-power recovery is not in the US's best interest, whether limited to Russia or proliferated, but likely not as US-focused as it would be under a resurgent Russia. Nonetheless, it can occur and deserves a few cautionary words.

As with most states, Russia pursues greater prestige, which often translates into reduced fears. The US military should be alert for changes in Russia's security-related prestige. Small to moderate increases, such as those following the events in Georgia which produced internal changes, afford opportunities to expand dialog and promote limited cooperation—incorporating regional allies and redirecting initiatives to avoiding defense issues.³⁴ Throughout all interactions, caution must prevail to prevent undermining support to US allies or inadvertent promotion of kinetic options by Russia—even if collaboration is clearly limited to a non-security arena. The following discussion presents opportunities for US-Russian collaboration on environmental cleanup, preparing the Arctic for increased commerce, countering terrorism, nuclear surety, and reducing organized crime and drugs prior to closing with caveats.

The existential threat posed by the Cold War placed prioritization of security developments—some toxic—above environmental protection. The US military continues to clean up areas negatively affected by procedures, which generated immense pollution at a time when few

³⁴ Following the Russia-Georgian war, Medvedev succeeded in restructuring the military to respond and perform better in a counterinsurgency (COIN) environment. This afforded an opportunity for Western militaries to offer exchanges to promote a more discriminatory and ethical approach to COIN as well as an opportunity to reinforce the advantages of a professional military institution subordinate to civil authorities.

recognized the consequences.³⁵ Russia today suffers from far greater pollution and a dearth of initiative to remedy it. Non-security collaboration focused on environmental cleanup would benefit Russian quality of life and create an additional industry. Similarly, US expertise on handling industrial waste could guide Russia through this process, which would expand business opportunities, generate local contacts, and demonstrate American working standards, benefits, and ethics to the Russian workforce.

Efforts to protect the environment should also work through the Arctic Council and include discussions on a cooperative approach to increased manned activity in the region. When Russia resumed strategic bomber patrols, it announced to the rest of the world that it was back as a power player, yet these patrols also demonstrated sufficient navigation, communications, and range capabilities required for maritime law enforcement and personal recovery efforts. Bringing Russian capabilities into discourse on hijacking management, tracking and containment of natural and manmade disasters, as well as search and rescue add legitimacy to their demonstrated capabilities by vectoring them toward a positive objective while expanding their credibility and capability as they refocus on the Arctic. Encouraging constructive use of increased prestige through positive, transparent, cooperative follow-up efforts and regular multinational exercises can normalize relations and build a responsive Arctic rescue and disaster response capability.

Over this past decade, multinational cooperation focused more on countering terrorism than preparing for expanded commerce in the Arctic, but more room remains for bilateral counterterrorism cooperation

³⁵ The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) overseas cleanup of industrial and military pollution. It recently celebrated the 31st anniversary of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), which funded environmental cleanup of the United States' most heavily polluted sites. The EPA website, <http://www.epa.gov>, includes articles describing cleanup of dozens of military bases and hundreds of defense-industrial sites.

between the United States and Russia. As the United States and its allies prepare to exit Afghanistan, they face the short-term need for continued access to airbases in Central Asia as well as a permissible northern logistics route. Russia is also concerned about stability across its southern region, but with a much longer aim point. A timely opportunity exists to collaborate on mapping terrorist organizations, promoting good governance, and emphasizing the advantages of minimizing collateral damage. While significant differences exist between both countries over how to handle terrorists, any opportunity to promote an expanded study of governance, with the objective of creating experts at building stable and responsive administrations, will increase the pool of government insiders aware of the rigors of democracy, and potentially positioned to influence Putin and his successors. An opportunity also exists for these specialized units to assume or share the US counter-opiates mission in Afghanistan.

As noted earlier in this paper, Russia has a significant drug problem, much of which originates in Southeast Asia. Incorporating Russian counter-drug and government-building specialists into US efforts in the region, and specifically in Afghanistan, would curtail the availability of opiates globally, as well as prolong the benefits US forces achieved beyond their withdrawal date. As Russia links the importance of this counter-drug effort to preserving their dwindling population and the potential negative impact of the planned US military withdrawal from Afghanistan the United States has the opportunity to promote the northern logistics network into Afghanistan and reduce restrictions on the materials this line of communication can transport. Furthermore, convincing Russia to enhance this rail network may improve access for Afghan minerals to global markets.

Official transnational transportation networks contribute to government revenues, passenger safety, and international relations, but open borders and established lines of communication also facilitate

international criminal organizations. Trafficking in weapons, people, and drugs undermine national sovereignty. Specifically, the opiates trafficked into Russia by organized crime reduces the labor pool for business or the military as it contributes to health epidemics including the spread of HIV and shorter life expectancy for Russian males. Additionally, drug profits often contribute to corruption, trafficking in persons, and black-market weapons. It is in both countries' interest to coordinate efforts against organized crime, and a Russia serious about reducing any of these criminal activities will become wealthier, more stable, and more transparent in the process as corruption declines. For the United States, reduced levels of corruption and organized crime in Russia are essential regarding concerns over WMD entering the black market.

Russia maintains vast quantities of WMD and receives US assistance in accounting for and making a portion of it safe. Some might argue the Russian withdrawal from START II was a negative for fear of an expanded nuclear force; others might claim it was a positive for nuclear surety. Withdrawal deferred Russia's transition, but did not remedy their limited annual production of strategic warheads. If the United States was concerned about loose nuclear material, then a reduction in missiles and warheads is a positive. MIRVing reduced the number of missiles, while warhead attrition reduced the number of weapons. Still, the United States missed the opportunity to transition negotiations from strategic weapons limitations to a focus on rounding up and reducing the far more numerous and more easily proliferated tactical nuclear weapons at a rate far faster than under the Nunn-Lugar assistance program.³⁶

US-Russian cooperation on reducing nuclear weapons should not infer a more coordinated security arrangement, even during times of restricted spending. The following caveats to cooperation focus on

³⁶ Togzhan Kassenova, and Toby Dalton, "Celebrating 20 Years of Nunn-Lugar, With Questions About the Future," Carnegie Endowment for Peace, December 12, 2011. <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/12/12/celebrating-20-years-of-nunn-lugar-with-questions-about-future/8kss>

security issues and highlight plausible concerns where mutual defense might initially appear tempting, but detrimental to the United States in the end. Limiting collaborative relations to non-security matters does not prohibit turning the results of independent military events into a positive elsewhere; rather, cautions against any temptation to jointly hedge China or the Muslim south, or grow complacent with respect to EU stability and general European security.

China has many challenges, but decades of recent economic success have enabled development of a robust military that is demonstrating regional assertiveness. The United States has many allies and security partners in the region, one of which, the Philippines, is currently engaged in a naval standoff with the Chinese.³⁷ Similarly, longtime Russian security partner Vietnam is also the recipient of maritime bullying by China.³⁸ India shares strong military ties to Russia and sides with Vietnam, while its strong economic ties to the United States may facilitate a trilateral security pact to hedge in China.

Unlimited or unrestricted war is unlikely between the United States and China or Russia and China, but limited regional conflict appears forthcoming.³⁹ As tempting as US-Indian-Russian military cooperation appears in this case, one must acknowledge how US allies and partners in the region would perceive this. Parallel efforts are fine, but bringing powerful nuclear navies into the region sends a far different message than does enabling regional actors with information, equipment,

³⁷ Associated Press, "Philippines-China standoff could spin out of hand," *Fox News*, 26 April 2012. <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2012/04/26/philippines-china-standoff-could-spin-out-hand/>; Manuel Mogato, "U.S. triples military aid to Philippines in 2012," *Reuters*, 3 May 2012

<http://au.news.yahoo.com/world/a/-/world/13596102/u-s-triples-military-aid-to-philippines-in-2012/>

³⁸ K. J. M. Varma, "Stay Away From South China Sea: China to Russia," *Outlook*, 10 April 2012, <http://news.outlookindia.com/items.aspx?artid=759140>

³⁹ Robert D. Kaplan, "The South China Sea Is the Future of Conflict: The 21st Century's Defining Battleground is Going to be On Water," *Foreign Policy* (September/October 2011). http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/08/15/the_south_china_sea_is_the_future_of_conflict?print=yes&hidecomments=yes&page=full. Kaplan argues nuclear war is unlikely between the three nations, but a regional conflict over the South China Sea is increasingly likely as countries in the region quickly increase their armaments in response to China.

training, and diplomatic and nuclear top cover. Perhaps the most positive approach would involve Russia joining the United States in placing diplomatic pressure on China: preserving commerce, deescalating regional tensions, supporting allies, and establishing a regional process for vetting disputes without fostering an arms race.

Also involving Russian-Chinese security concerns is the growing potential of the Arctic. The Brookings Institute's Johannes F. Linn identified a "super-continental opportunity for Russia" to reconnect European and Asian markets much as the Mongols did with their great Silk Road.⁴⁰ Traversing great distances by sea, rail, or pipeline, northern trade routes would increase the value and population of Russia's Far East. Linn warned, "If there is a lesson to be learned from the history of Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries, it is that economic integration alone does not result in peace and prosperity."⁴¹ Should the increased value of the Arctic result in a Russian-Chinese arms race or physical territorial dispute, the United States should remain well clear, while taking the opportunity to reinforce its regional allies and protect its interests in the region, including freedom of navigation and security on international trade. The United States is unique in its level of maritime dominance, yet risks exacerbating China's security dilemma through a military partnership with Russia in the Arctic.

Groups will often fight to ensure cultural and ethnic survival. Increasing religious tensions in Europe and Asia will produce a Eurasian fight for survival similar to that waged by the three Jewish tribes of Medina against Mohammad. Demographic changes in Europe and Russia generated labor vacancies, which sparked a return to ancient migrant flows from south to north. Samuel P. Huntington captured these trends and the associated historic conflict in his book *The Clash of*

⁴⁰ Johannes F. Linn, "Eurasian Integration: A Super-Continental Opportunity for Russia," Opinion, Brookings, 24 November 2006, http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2006/1124russia_linn.aspx

⁴¹ Linn, "Eurasian Integration."

Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order.⁴² Where these flows backfilled labor voids created by declining Northern populations, they brought cultural tensions which played to Russia's fear of invasion.

Though politically taboo to discuss, strategists must consider the possibility of an alliance between Eurasian Christians to balance the rapidly growing Muslim populations or a coalition of the Arctic States or the West and India with Russia to hedge an expanding China. The United States, a country founded by and predicated on immigrants from every culture, is in a different situation than France, Russia, and Germany who live with both multiculturalism and a history of invasion. However, Europe may end up in another great war over sovereignty or energy instead of religion.

As in Ancient Greece, the First World War, and Gorbachev's USSR, union members who defect by establishing bilateral relationships might tear the EU apart through a balance-of-power or balance-of-threat war or through separation to regain full sovereignty. Russia's expanding bilateral agreements with independent EU members, many centered on energy sales, lend credence to this possibility. Furthermore, historical precedence exists for Western European states to balance each other by aligning with Russia when she was strong and resourceful but incapable of conquest in Western Europe, and opposing Russia once she became a superpower. Russia is once again a strong wealthy neighbor incapable of European conquest. Strategists must consider the geopolitical impact of a return to European balancing through Russia. Specifically, US strategists should contemplate the potential to drive some former Soviet states back to Russia or further challenge NATO at a time of declining European defense budgets, continuing commitments in Afghanistan, and

⁴² Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (Boulder, CO: Simon & Schuster, 1998).

the repercussions for the global economy of continued European energy dependence on Russia.

Conclusion.

Russian energy sales contributed significantly to economic recovery under Putin. On the heels of post-Soviet uncertainty and decline, Putin used rebounding energy prices as a fulcrum to rebuild Russia, but he did so in an increasingly authoritarian way and approaching anocracy or a modern tsar. This chapter forecast two possible paths down which Putin could guide Russia during in his next presidency.

Driven by culture, capabilities, and a growing middle class, Russia will likely reemerge as a global power player, but not a counter to the United States. Distancing itself from its Soviet past, the reemerging Russia will balance hard and soft power with a tendency toward the latter; will be more responsible, and even more democratic in its own way. From a Western perspective, a more amicable reemerging Russia appears tempting as an ally or strategic partner, but caution is justified. This chapter outlined many positive opportunities for cooperation as well as some warnings for areas in which to avoid collaboration. The Russia of the near future will retain its culture and historical roots, even if the form of government shifts slightly. Its geopolitical history is full of reasons justifying their security fears. Therefore, the best way forward for US-Russian relations is a positive focus on building non-security relationships starting with protecting environment, countering crime, and expanding trade.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Putin's transition from politics in Saint Petersburg to Moscow in 1997 symbolized a power shift in several ways. Trust was paramount to Putin and his loyalty to Yeltsin resulted in rapid promotions and increased power. As his influence increased, he brought more of the Saint Petersburg crowd into the regime. Additionally, he gradually transitioned power away from the old regime and influential military to the security services and political appointees, from the legislature and governors, to the president and prime minister: a throwback of sorts to the despots of tsarist times, but still culturally apt.

Russia has a unique culture, language, and religion, and a strong sense of insecurity derived from centuries of nearly constant threats: some geographic, or climatologic, but most from other military powers. As the Soviet Union ended, leaders pushed sweeping changes counter to many aspects of Russian culture, which, under the weight of declining energy revenues, fomented great instability. A culturally-aware Putin stabilized Russia, consolidated and asserted power, and began a gradual modernization of the state before passing the presidency to Medvedev in the pivotal year of 2008. The events of that year enabled further reforms across Russia, the products of which led the author to forecast two distinct futures for Russia during Putin's next presidency. The first assumes current trends continue in Russia and lead to its resurgence as a challenger to the United States. The second, and more likely option, is a Russia reemerging as something new—a wealthy state held to account by its people, but yet democratic in a way distinctly Russian. Based on the more likely reemerging Russia, I close with recommendations for improving US-Russian relations while avoiding security cooperation;

these recommendations build on positive objectives and an awareness of Russian culture.

History defining Culture

Cultures take time to shape and Russian culture is a product of overcoming challenging circumstances for hundreds of years. Realized security threats forced migration into a harsh geography and climate, which, along with the norms and governing structures of invaders, shaped Russian culture. Ultimately, centralized power employed Russia's large population as a fulcrum to expand both territory and power—eventually overcoming their former invaders and expanding through the Soviet era until their span of control resembled that of the Mongolian Empire: that of a superpower.

As Russia expanded and confronted its neighbors, it carried with it a unique language and attitude. Despite the preponderance of Russia's resources residing in Asia, the majority of Russians lived west of the Ural Mountains and historically looked to Western and Northern Europe for social and military norms. One should not confuse Russians with Europeans, but recognize they are an Asian culture with significant European influences. Territorial expansion was often opportunistic, taking advantage of internal problems within the Mongol and Persian empires as well as exploiting weaknesses in China, Turkey, and Northeastern Europe from external wars. Nonetheless, invasion of Russia was common throughout its history.

Russian paranoia from internal and external threats was justified by experience; persistent security threats to the nation called for a large standing military. Founded by Tsar Peter the Great and filled from Russia's large population, nearly constant employment of the military strained the Russian economic and social systems.

Following the death of Peter the Great, Russia hosted a variety of leaders in rapid succession until Peter's second daughter, Anna recovered the throne (from an infant) in a coup d'état and initiated

Russian emergence as a Eurasian power. Beginning under her reign Russia experienced very rapid expansion of its population and power and a moderate growth in territory that lasted approximately three hundred years and reached its apex as the Soviet Union. Throughout this amazing growth in population and power, Russian culture maintained many of the Asian roots introduced by the Mongols and Turks early in its history.

Russia's vast territory, sparse population, and requirement to collect tribute for dominant Asian hordes created a patriarchal culture in which those at the service of the state received no pay beyond what they collected from the people. This expectation for officials to live off the land equated power to wealth (as the more power one had, the more he could extract from the people) and opened the door for bribery as a cultural norm. Meanwhile, the need to organize against external threats and poor crop yields permitted consolidation of power considered acceptable under both the Russian Orthodox Church and Russia's traditionally patriarchal structure.

As far back as Muscovite Russia, power has been absolute in the patriarchal sense, employed successfully enough to overcome Russia's geographic and climatologic disadvantages as well as constant security threats. Strong rulers succeeded in guiding Russia through significant modernizations. With few exceptions, these social, governmental, or military shifts originated at the top.

Historically and culturally aware, the current Russian leadership is employing techniques from this history to remedy demographic, economic, and military cataclysms. Historical precedence exists for the rapid growth of the Russian population, for a further centralization of power, and for continued security concerns. Putin's historical awareness and cultural astuteness contrasts with the rapid and reckless policies of his predecessors.

Putin

The unexpected death of the Soviet Union left Russia with strengths, such as a vast nuclear arsenal and veto authority on the United Nations Security Council, but also levied the financial burdens of an empire on a petro-state with energy prices in prolonged decline. Late- and post-Soviet Russian leaders' attempts to force openness and liberalizing reforms on an unprepared society and an unsupportive economy failed. Lacking widespread support, Yeltsin enlisted the shrinking, but powerful and reliable military, "which survived defeat and revolution and remained a concrete center of power amidst political disintegration," to support his agenda.¹ Nonetheless, the receding economy, expensive inherited Soviet military, and dwindling population forced a drawdown within the sacred defense establishment.

The "centralization of power [was] the prerequisite to social and economic reform" in Russia, while strong and stable energy prices enabled recovery and change.² With declining energy prices, the nascent Russia Federation of the 1990s experienced a dwindling economy, neglected infrastructure, a plummeting population held afloat by culturally different immigrants, and a military too expensive to maintain economically, unable to supply with recruits, and ill-suited for the political objectives assigned. As energy prices recovered, Putin entered his first presidency, where he began consolidating power, stabilizing the economy, and reducing liberties, but he was not able to reverse negative population growth in Russia.

The declining ethnically Rus population exacerbated Kremlin fears of internal and external threats. Traditionally Russia's robust population and expansive lands gave her great strength. Today, a smattering of health, environmental, and social problems contribute to the decline in

¹ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1981), 109.

² Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (Boulder, CO: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 141.

this traditionally expansive population. One must recognize this is only a trend and trends can change. That said, Russia's population cannot physically surge overnight, but it can increase rapidly as it did in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Unlike its East-Asian and Western-European neighbors whose high life expectancies and low birthrates produced a rapidly aging population, Russia's male population does not hold high life expectancy. If Putin can reduce the social problems among the working-age Russians, the country will gain some advantage over its neighbors.

While health problems continued at an alarming rate in Russia, Putin made great strides elsewhere, increasing economic opportunities that fostered an emergent middle class, but through increasingly autocratic means. Putin consolidated power through his division of other power brokers and political appointees. He shifted power away from the military to a broader set of security agencies, added councils to the legislature, appointed regional governors, and placed presidential representatives throughout industry and the military to reduce the relative power wielded by each organization. Despite Putin's power grab, he complied with the Constitutional limit of two consecutive presidential terms and relinquished the presidency to Medvedev in 2008.

2008

Two thousand and eight was a decisive year for Russia; the Medvedev-Putin team found opportunities following the Georgian war and in the global economic crisis to recast both the military and the economy. Lacking independent accountability, they reigned in the Russian military through their tough civilian head of the Ministry of Defense, and redirected the economy in line with the East-Asian practice of a command market economy. Additionally, they addressed corruption in its Russian sense—those who take advantage of the state (unauthorized sale of military equipment, bad loans to the state, and more) are corrupt. Absent from this list of achievements was a reduction

in bribery and the black market, environmental cleanup, investment in infrastructure, and the protection of civil liberties.

Perhaps these exclusions fit with the traditional Russian perception of government employment as disassociated from public service; appointees versus representatives traditionally administered the state's business rather than represented their constituency to the state. In the traditional top-down directed society of old and new Russia, power is constantly in jeopardy, placing trust relationships over transparency and public accountability. This power structure fits well with Russia's enduring fear of internal and external threats.

Russian perceptions of external threats follow historical precedence. From Kievan Rus, through the Muscovite, Romanov, and Bolshevik eras, invasion from Asian hordes in the East or Europeans in the West has occurred. As devastating as invasion was, the possibility of nuclear annihilation was worse. Modern Russia continues its focus on nuclear weapons for a myriad of reasons including global prestige and balancing the United States. Additionally, tactical nuclear weapons offset Russia's shrinking military under some scenarios. Medvedev's military changes incorporated civilian control and improved command and control of nuclear forces.

Externally-forced military reforms under the triumvirate of Medvedev, Putin, and Serdyukov slashed the number of officers, established a non-commissioned officer corps, streamlined professional military education, sought to improve the military's low living standards, and took a hard stance against corruption. As an additional benefit, construction of a modern digital force included expansion of Russia's high technology, nanotechnology, space, aircraft, and nuclear sectors, which furthered Medvedev and Putin's economic objective of diversifying Russia's economy away from the dynamic commodities market.

Recovery from the 2008 global financial crisis defined Medvedev's presidency. The extent of the crisis and its impact on the Russian

economy demonstrated to Russia's leaders the depth of global economic integration. During this crisis, Russia benefited from hidden economic stabilizers built under Putin, and eventually recovered its economy. Yet despite economic recovery, Russia remains burdened by its crumbled infrastructure, extensive pollution, questionable civil liberties, rampant corruption, and demographic decline. Nonetheless, the emerging Russia is wealthy, strong, and increasingly competitive.

Domestically, a byproduct of Putin's success was the creation of a nascent middle class, who, beyond simply an empowered consumer group, experimented with political participation and increasingly challenged Putin for more opportunities for upward mobility and expanded political participation. As with Catherine the Great, Putin selectively adopted foreign modernization while maintaining Russian culture. After Catherine expanded liberties, the French Revolution shook monarchies across Europe and led her to crack down at home. Putin is following Catherine's model with respect to civil liberties. As former Putin supporters dissented, the government quietly monitored their organizations and then targeted movement leaders.

The Likely Future

Entering his third presidential term, Putin may elect to continue his authoritarian transition, or transition to a more representative and balanced government. Chapter 5 explored both futures and found a resurgent Russia capable of balancing the United States as possible, but less likely than the reemergence of Russia as a stable regional power. Maintaining the status quo will lead to the resurgent model.

In his first twelve years at the head of the Russian government, Putin strengthened the country while he consolidated power and reduced freedoms in a gradual move toward autocracy. Historically, Russians accepted a strong central figure and reduced liberties as long as it produced stability, security, and growth. Russia's current wealth and residual hard power as well as a growing global demand for energy and

the increasing importance of the Arctic lend credence to the concept of a resurgent Russia.

As the Russian economy recovered, Putin began upgrading the aged Russian military and expanding security forces while increasing aggressive rhetoric regionally and domestically. Translating hard-power capacity into bullying of international corporations and Russia's neighbors or a further revoking of liberties domestically may produce positive results for Russia, especially with the absence of a counter force as NATO countries address their own economic woes. Contrarily, a return to Soviet bullying and bellicose regional approach will likely generate undesired consequences including political blowback from the international community, collaboration of subject states against Russia, or rebellion.

Partially as a byproduct of his success, a continuance toward despotism does not appear sustainable. Prior to the most recent Russian election, the government showed unusual restraint when containing protests. Then, when protesters returned on the eve of Putin's inauguration, they met the tyrannical police of old.³ This is not Stalin's Russia, and crackdowns on those civil liberties Russian came to expect would rapidly make their way onto one of the myriad of social networks. James C. Davies' theory of progressive deprivation associated revolutions to a sudden relative loss of fortune or opportunity after a "prolonged period of objective economic and social development."⁴ Nonetheless, Putin may continue on a path toward resurgence built on hard power and an anocratic polity to reestablish a tsarist-styled despotic state with a variety of democratic, but powerless, institutions to appease those who

³ Associated Press, "Moscow Protesters Arrested in March Against Putin," As posted on *Fox News*, 6 May 2012, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2012/05/06/protesters-gather-for-moscow-march/?test=latestnews>

⁴ James C. Davies, "Toward a Theory of Revolution," *American Sociological Review*, no. XXVII (February 1962): 6. As quoted in Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971), 52.

desire increased participation through the perception of democracy. In any case, the US military and economy grew so far ahead of their Russian competition over the past two decades Putin stands little chance of regaining superpower status for Russia anytime soon.⁵

A different and more likely option for Russia is reemergence as a fundamentally different state; one balancing hard and soft power, which is more stable, responsible, and accountable to its people, but democratic in a way unique to Russian culture. A 2009 RAND study concluded, “The Russia that has reemerged as a foreign policy challenge for the United States today is significantly different from the Russia of the recent past—it is wealthier, more stable, increasingly less democratic, and more assertive globally.”⁶ While these attributes capture the current state, they dismiss the growth of politically aware and globally connected Russians in the middle and upper-middle classes.

While the future is unknowable, it is a matter of time before the politically aware Russian middle class and their elected representatives whose authorities and powers diminished in recent years push Kremlin leaders “for more pluralism and democracy.”⁷ Putin is aware of this looming challenge to his authority as well as external threats from a rising China and US missile defense advancements; examples supporting enduring Russian insecurity. It is likely Putin will successfully defer acquiescence to calls for increased democracy by calling attention to these threats; this approach will not last. Rather, paradoxically, as Putin further increases the national power he might use repressively at home or abroad, the greater the wealth, strength, and communication of the Russian middle class as empowering a small number of oligarchs or

⁵ Jennifer Gandhi and James Vreeland, *Political Institutions and Civil War: Unpacking Anocracy*, 30 August 2004, http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/jrv24/Gandhi_and_Vreeland.pdf

⁶ Olga Oliker et al., *Russian Foreign Policy: Sources and Implications* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Publishing, 2009), xi.

⁷ Oliker et al., *Russian Foreign Policy*, 176.

foreign powers builds competition for the presidency and the state. A reemerging Russia will not be able to balance the power of the United States, but negative rhetoric and policies would add to the time and credibility Putin has for his efforts ultimately to succeed.

Positive opportunities exist for US-Russian cooperation, while avoiding teamwork on security-related issues. The Russia of the near future will retain its culture, historical roots, and security fears although its form of government may shift slightly. The United States has several opportunities to both shape and support Russian reemergence as more democratic and internationally responsible, or to dwell on foreign policy differences. Russia “does not pose a military threat to the United States except in the most theoretical of terms.”⁸ The best way forward for US-Russian relations is to abandon inflammatory rhetoric in favor of a positive focus on building non-security relationships starting with mutual interests of protecting the environment, countering crime, and expanding trade. Now is time to take the high road; the United States should engage the emerging Russia actively and positively, maximizing cooperative non-security opportunities.

⁸ Olikier et al., *Russian Foreign Policy*, 176.

Acronyms

ICBM – Intercontinental Ballistic Missile

MIRV – Multiple Independently targetable Reentry Vehicles

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NCO – Noncommissioned Officer

RIC – Russia, India, and China

SACEUR – Supreme Allied Commander Europe

START – Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty

SVR – Foreign Intelligence Service

UK – United Kingdom

UN – United Nations

UNCLOS III – UN Convention on the Law of the Sea

US – United States

USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

WMD – Weapons of Mass Destruction

WTO – World Trade Organization

WWII – World War 2

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